

# News from behind the IRON CURTAIN

June 1954

\$3.00 per year

Vol. 3, No. 6



## FEATURES

- Machine Tractor Stations
- Internal Trade and Consumer Goods in Poland
- The Lost Pliers
- Creating the Communist Elite
- The Critics Cornered
- Radio Free Europe



# News from behind the IRON CURTAIN

Free Europe Committee, Inc.

June 1954 — Vol. 3 — No. 6

## OFFICERS

JOSEPH C. GREW  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
ARTHUR W. PAGE  
CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
WHITNEY H. SHEPARDSON  
PRESIDENT  
FREDERIC R. DOLBEARE  
ROBERT E. LANG  
LEVERING TYSON  
SAMUEL S. WALKER, JR.  
BERNARD YARROW  
VICE PRESIDENTS  
THEODORE C. AUGUSTINE  
SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT TREASURER  
J. CLAYTON MILLER  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

## MEMBERS

Clarence L. Adcock  
Raymond Pace Alexander  
Frank Altschul  
Laird Bell  
A. A. Berle, Jr.\*  
Francis Biddle  
Robert Woods Bliss  
Robert F. Bradford  
Harry A. Bullis  
James B. Carey  
Harry Woodburn Chase  
Lucius D. Clay  
William L. Clayton  
Clark M. Clifford  
Cecil B. DeMille  
Frank R. Denton  
Frederic R. Dolbeare\*  
William J. Donovan  
Mark F. Ethridge  
James A. Farley  
Julius Fleischmann\*  
Henry Ford II  
Virginia C. Gildersleeve  
Joseph C. Grew\*  
Charles R. Hook  
Palmer Hoyt  
Paul Kesten\*  
Henry R. Luce  
Joseph V. McKee  
Web Maddox  
H. B. Miller\*  
Irving S. Olds\*  
Frederick Osborn  
Arthur W. Page\*  
Spencer Phenix  
Whitney H. Shepardson\*  
George N. Shuster\*  
John A. Sibley  
Spyros Skouras  
Charles M. Spofford\*  
Charles P. Taft  
H. Gregory Thomas\*  
Levering Tyson  
DeWitt Wallace  
W. W. Waymack  
Walter H. Wheeler, Jr.  
Charles E. Wilson  
Mrs. Quincy Wright  
Darryl Zanuck

\* Board of Directors

## • CONTENTS •

	Page
MACHINE TRACTOR STATIONS . . . . .	3
<i>This revealing article explores the connection between the New Course and MTS development. It examines the structure, function and shortcomings of these Communist centers of mechanization and indoctrination in the countryside.</i>	
INTERNAL TRADE AND CONSUMER GOODS IN POLAND . . .	15
<i>The first in a series examining the effect of the New Course on internal trade of the Satellites, this article covers consumer goods production, investments, quantity, quality and variety, and internal trade in Poland.</i>	
THE LOST PLIERS . . . . .	20
<i>An escape story whose drama and suspense takes the reader through a Hungarian's departure from the Recsk concentration camp and his subsequent flight to freedom from the concentration camp that is Satellite Hungary.</i>	
CREATING THE COMMUNIST ELITE . . . . .	22
<i>How do Communists go about shaping their top and middle leadership? This exclusive report on the Andrei Jdanov School in Bucharest—where Romanian Satellite leadership is indoctrinated—gives us a first look into a top Party school in East Europe.</i>	
THE CRITICS CORNERED . . . . .	27
<i>Communist book reviewing finds the critic cornered by the contradictory intangibles of regime desires and intentions and the tangibles of its punishments if he should not be able to meet Party requirements. This situation has produced a betwixt-and-between criticism whose chief trait is unwillingness to commit itself on literary values.</i>	
RADIO FREE EUROPE . . . . .	37
<i>Four scripts broadcast through the Iron Curtain discuss East-West trade, Zapotocky's troubles with the Czechoslovak Sokol, a linguistic slip by Marshall Rokossowski, Russian proconsul in Poland, and a characteristic example of Communist rewriting of history in Hungary.</i>	
The Month in Review . . . . .	1
Current Developments . . .	41
ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION . . .	

NEWS FROM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, published monthly by the Free Europe Press of the Free Europe Committee, is distributed to those with a specific interest in events and developments in Communist-dominated Europe. This bulletin is made available to representatives of the press and other media, to universities, churches, libraries, and research centers, and to other groups of citizens who want to know more about "Communism in practice." The magazine is not an organ of editorial policy; wherever possible direct quotation is used to provide source material and to document commentary. The Committee believes that accurate information contributes to an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Communist system, and hence to the ability of the free nations to combat this system.

NEWS FROM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN is published monthly, copyright 1954 by the Free Europe Press, Free Europe Committee, Inc., 110 West 57 Street, New York 19, N. Y. Material contained herein may be quoted without permission, provided reference is made to this publication. Subscriptions \$3.00 per year. Subscriptions and communications should be sent to the above address.

# The Month in Review



**N**EW Course economic problems and emphases were revealed in various pronouncements and concessions made in the Soviet orbit during the past month. In Poland, the regime attempted to give workers incentive to raise output by declaring a **second New Course price reduction** on food and industrial products. This measure supposedly will result in an annual savings to the people of six billion *zlotys*. Although in November the regime announced that further price cuts would represent mere "adventurism" unless they were supported by production rises and increased market supplies, it is obvious that this second price reduction is not a result of improved conditions. Rather, the Communists hope that the price cuts will pave the way for future improvements.

The emphasis placed on raising production was evident also in the efforts devoted to spring sowing and potato planting, as well as the plowing of fallow Polish lands. Further, State Agricultural Machine Centers were ordered to **cut plowing prices** both for **collective and individual farms**. By intensifying its farm program, the regime expects that by 1955 grain production will increase by about 600,000 tons as compared with 1952, and that the number of cattle will increase by 500,000, pigs by 1,000,000, and sheep by 900,000.

In Hungary, also, attention was focussed on boosting farm production, improving work on kolkhozes and increasing the livestock population. Of particular importance in this campaign was propaganda **wooing the middle peasant** as a regime ally. The Party press published numerous articles insisting that middle peasants should not be confused with kulaks nor regarded with undue suspicion. One editorial even defended the middle peasants' right to live in "nice houses" and pointed out that they were "decent, worthy peasants" who never engaged in "systematic exploitation." This effort to draw a **sharp line between kulaks and middle peasants** is clearly based on Communist dependence on individual farm production for increasing food supplies. However, collective farms will still benefit most from farm concessions. This was evident in a recent Bulgarian decree reducing income taxes for kolkhozes, kolkhoz members and other "categories of citizens."

Industrial problems were also underscored in the Satellite area. Czechoslovak Communists issued a series of bitter complaints about **low worker productivity, mounting production costs** and the **large number of rejects** turned out by various factories and enterprises. The press referred in these criticisms to continued and widespread worker absenteeism, negligence and apathy. The seriousness of present conditions is indicated not only by the large number of statistics published to illustrate shortcomings but also by the recent postponement of union shop committee elections until next fall. By that time the regime apparently hopes to gain greater control over conditions and ensure the election of efficient, pro-regime shop committee officials.

**Violations of wage discipline** were sharply rebuked by the Hungarian regime. The Party press claimed that wage funds frequently were handled "too liberally," and that

bonuses were granted without justification. To remedy this practice, the Council of Ministers passed a resolution stating that disciplinary action would be taken against plant managers who regularly paid out salaries in excess of established wage bases, and that persons committing "wage frauds" would be brought to trial. The resolution states further that officials who have paid out wages for work that has not been performed will not only be punished but also made to assume financial responsibility.

Another important feature of New Course plans is **boosting coal production**. The latest country to stress improvements in the raw material base was Bulgaria, which published a decree announcing increased capital investments in mining and Second Five Year Plan production targets. The Party attributed the current lag in coal production to poor management and inadequate planning, and declared that political work among miners must be improved, "**Socialist competitions**" developed, **new pits** established, and **geological research** expanded. According to recent reports, the construction of new pits is far behind schedule and many of the old pits are exhausted as a result of the regime's previous policy of ruthless industrialization. Because of the time required to find new coal, iron ore and copper reserves, and to build new mines, the present situation probably will continue for some time to come.

Another event connected with mining conditions was a Polish **trial of two men** accused of **starting a mine fire**. Although no casualties were reported, the court handed down severe sentences and charged the defendants with intentional sabotage "inspired by Western propaganda." The trial followed a recent mine disaster in Chorzow which resulted in many deaths, and thus may have been a regime attempt to "prove" its own innocence and concern for the miners' welfare. However, commentaries on the disaster confirmed private reports about the **inadequate safety measures** taken in Polish mines. Although the Communist press used the occasion to stress the importance of vigilance and the danger of enemy activity, it also saw fit to caution mining officials about the importance of observing health and safety regulations, and promised severe punishment for those who transgress them.

A trial in Slovakia resulted in the conviction of five prominent Communists, including Husak and Novomesky, as "bourgeois-nationalist traitors" and "Slanskyite conspirators." The accused, who were charged with "Slovak separatism", allegedly carried out espionage for "Western imperialists" against the "national State interests of the Slovak people and the security and unity of the Czechoslovak State."

Another Czechoslovak **trial** was held in connection with **national committee elections**. Six men were prosecuted as US espionage agents who smuggled spies across the border and tried to "disrupt the peaceful building of the working people." One defendant was also charged with attempting to ruin preparations for the national committee election. This allegation was clearly implausible and must have been an attempt to frighten Czechoslovak voters into obedience. That this might have been necessary was indicated by the national committee **election results** which showed a **smaller percentage of pro-regime votes** than usual. The official returns stated that 98.3 percent of the voters had gone to the polls and that 93.6 percent had voted for the regime. This means that five percent voted against the regime—a larger percentage than the Communists ordinarily admit to in their fixed elections.



# Machine Tractor Stations

- Why did the Communists create State-run machine centers?
- How were these stations organized and how successful are they?
- Is there any connection between the New Course and MTS development?
- What are some of the changes that have recently taken place in the nature and functions of the MTS?

The present article attempts to answer these and related questions, chiefly on the basis of information released by the Communists themselves. It takes the reader behind the meaningless array of regime statistics that—in this as in many other instances—camouflaged large areas of flagrant failures.

EVER SINCE Stalin's death and particularly following Khrushchev's September 3, 1953 survey of 36 years of dismal failure in Soviet agriculture, there has been a marked change in rural policies throughout the Satellite orbit. This New Course program, however, is neither a result of the Russian tyrant's death nor is it a repudiation of his lifelong aims: Stalin's demise merely made it easier for more flexible, more realistic successors to acknowledge that the whole Soviet edifice was badly cracked and in need of immediate repairs.

Now that more than half a year has passed since the Communists officially launched their new policy, it has become clear that they do not intend to tear down the old structure. The building of heavy industry, that cornerstone of Stalinist economic policy, is to continue (though at a reduced pace) and the ultimate goal of total collectivization of the land has by no means been abandoned. On the whole, present plans do not entail major shifts in men,

money or materiel and, in essence, it appears that the new policy calls for a partial respite, for a period of consolidation and a more balanced exploitation of available facilities. Seen in that light, the New Course is primarily an economic and political necessity.

The relentless economic force that finally punctured the hierarchy's inflated political ambitions is perhaps nowhere as apparent as in the ever-widening disparity that occurred in the last few years between the tremendous increase in the area of collectivized land and the supply of machines with which to cultivate it. The table below shows the changing ratio between the growth in tractors—the most common and useful of agricultural machines—held by Machine Tractor Stations (the government-operated rural centers entrusted with the task of supplying machinery to kolkhozes) and the increase in arable land held by collective farms:

Country	Arable land in kolkhozes (in hectares)		Percent of increase	No. of tractors in MTS (in 15 hp.)		Percent of increase
	Summer '51	Summer '53		Summer '51	Summer '53	
Hungary .....	470,380 <sup>1</sup>	1,494,000 <sup>2</sup>	218	6,681 <sup>3</sup>	9,400 <sup>4</sup>	40.7
Bulgaria .....	April '50 600,000 <sup>5</sup>	Dec. '53 2,512,500 <sup>6</sup>	319	April '50 7,800 <sup>7</sup>	Dec. '53 13,051 <sup>8</sup>	67
Romania .....	Summer '51 297,000 <sup>9</sup>	Summer '53 732,000 <sup>10</sup>	144	Summer '51 7,309 <sup>11</sup>	Summer '53 9,650 <sup>12</sup>	32
Poland .....	Dec. '50 371,500 <sup>13</sup>	Dec. '52 711,300 <sup>14</sup>	91.5	Dec. '50 5,000 <sup>15</sup>	Dec. '52 11,300 <sup>16</sup>	126

1. Zoltan Vas, Plan for second year of Five Year Plan, *Szakra*, 1951, p. 15; 2. See April issue, page 25; 3. *Gazdasagpolitikai Tájékoztató*, January 1952; 4. Based on Hegedus speech, *Szabad Nép* (Budapest), March 13, 1954; 5. See March issue, page 17; 6. See March issue, page 17; 7 & 8. Based on the *Handbook of the Agitator* (Sofia) No. 36, page 15; 9 & 10. See March issue, page 10—these figures do not include arable land held by Agricultural Associations comprising roughly 250,000 hectares and serviced by MTS; 11. *Viata Sindicala* (Bucharest), August 19, 1951; 12. *Scinteia* (Bucharest), July 4, 1953; 13 & 14. See February issue, page 17; 15. *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), January 18, 1951; 16. *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), January 29, 1953.

Figures for Czechoslovakia are not available, but indications are that in that country too the gap between the amount of arable land in kolkhozes and the number of machines supplied to MTS has been widening. As for the other countries, the table appears to be a key to an understanding of present agricultural policies. For Hungary, the figures might explain why the hierarchy was compelled, because of economic necessity, to allow a sudden and substantial reduction in the number of kolkhozes last summer. As shown by the table, up to then the regime had persisted in its frantic collectivization drive in complete disregard for the glaring lack of necessary equipment. The two-year increase of 218 percent in arable land held by collectives by far outstripped the negligible 40.7 percent addition in the most essential type of agricultural machinery. The dosage and nature of the remedy had to be more drastic than in any other Satellite—chiefly because the regime's blind obstinacy had led the country furthest along the road to economic disaster.

In Bulgaria, on the other hand, the Communists were aware of the danger signals as early as December 1951 and collectivization has been virtually at a standstill since the end of 1952. Though it is true that the best land had already been collectivized by that time, it is nonetheless significant that the Bulgarian regime had to stop in its tracks long before it reached the avowed goal of total collectivization (see March 1954 issue, page 17). In Romania too, the Communists had to slacken the tempo of collectivization some time in 1952 (see March issue, page 10), even though the proportion of machinery in MTS in relation to kolkhoz arable land was more favorable than in a country like Hungary.

The crucial importance of MTS-held machinery is perhaps most clearly illustrated in the case of Poland, the only country continuing with collectivization. Thus, according to the communique of the State Planning Commission (published in *Trybuna Ludu* [Warsaw] of February 6), there were 8,000 kolkhozes at the end of 1953; only a few weeks later, on March 16, the same paper printed a speech by Deputy Prime Minister Zenon Nowak, in which he stated that by then the number had risen to 8,500. The table above indicates that Poland, more than any other Satellite country, possesses the machine basis for expansion of collectivization: only in that country did the number of MTS tractors increase at a faster rate than the amount of arable land incorporated into collectives.

### I. MTS As an Economic Factor

As crucial regime levers, indispensable in the implementation of basic rural policies, MTS come under the direct control of the Ministry of Agriculture for all matters affecting finance, administration, machinery supply and determination of work norms. The head of a station is the director, appointed by the Ministry. His staff is likely to include an assistant manager (very often the political agent for the region), a number of agronomists, as well as mechanics and drivers who handle the equipment. Besides these technicians, the station also includes a number of administrative personnel.



"Please! please! couldn't you plow just a little piece?"  
*Spółdzielnia Produkcjna* (Warsaw), November 26, 1953

According to a thorough and authoritative refugee report on conditions at the typical Romanian MTS at Rovine, there were 220-240 persons at this center two years ago. Though conditions may have changed somewhat since then (insofar as slight increases in machines, personnel and in the area covered by the station, may have taken place), on the whole, the report contains the broad outlines of the administrative setup common throughout the area today. The exile reports that the Rovine station supplied machinery to collectives in Zabrani, Glogovat and Bugeac—in all, some 8,000 hectares of arable land. Apart from the director, the technical staff consisted of an engineer-agronomist, a chief mechanic, a workshop foreman, 14 agronomists, 112 driver mechanics, 40 threshing, reaping and sowing machine workers, 15 repairmen and an additional 14 men who combined the functions of surveyors (of the area to be cultivated) and controllers (with respect to the number of work days devoted to each kolkhoz). The administrative personnel consisted of a chief accountant and his assistant, three storekeepers, four canteen workers, two cooks, as well as a cashier and his assistant. The all-inclusiveness of this complement points to the self-sufficiency and independence enjoyed by MTS as regime instruments.

To carry out the field work, each MTS is divided into teams called "brigades," which, in Rovine, numbered 14 persons each. A report by the Bulgarian Minister of Agriculture Stanko Todorov, published in *Zemledelsko Zname* (Sofia) of December 2, 1953, states that "a single tractor brigade serves an average of 3-4 kolkhozes." This may be somewhat more work than is usual in the other countries, since Bulgaria appears to be the only Satellite where, according to a decree by the Council of Ministers published in *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) of June 25, 1950, kolkhozes have to supply auxiliary personnel to assist tractor brigades in their work. In the other countries, though the majority of MTS members are originally recruited from among the collectives, the two are distinct organizations and operate as such.

The amount of equipment available varies from station to station and from country to country. In Hungary, according to a recent refugee account, the MTS at Tiszapolgrad had at its disposal one rubber-tire tractor, 26 ordinary tractors, 24 threshing machines (five of which could be used on electric power), three cranes, three combines, 10 sowing machines, one disc harrow, four harrow-and-roller machines and three rollers. The corresponding figures for Rovine were: 52 Romanian-made tractors, 12 Romanian or German-made threshing machines, 12 reapers, 12 sowing machines and one Soviet-made combine. Although the Hungarian station had only 70 members (including 38 tractor drivers) and, although its equipment did not match that of the Romanian center, the area it serviced was probably just as large, if not larger. While the 8,000 hectares covered by Rovine correspond to roughly 13,900 cadastral acres, according to *Szabad Nep* (Budapest) of February 14, 1954, "a [Hungarian] MTS is responsible for twelve kolkhozes in an area of fifteen village communities; this amounts to 14,650 cadastral acres," further evidence of the greater relative weakness in Hungarian mechanization.

Payment to individual MTS members is geared as far as possible to norm fulfillment, the type and the quality of work performed, and the ultimate results achieved. Payment is in both money and kind, but chiefly in cash. As described in a decree of the Council of Ministers published in *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) of June 25, 1950, a Bulgarian "senior tractorist" received 20 to 38.40 *leva* in money and 5 to 9.6 kg. of wheat per day (depending on the kind of tractor he handled) if he fulfilled the 70 decare norm. The brigadier received 25 percent more than the senior tractorist, and the average tractor driver received 10 percent less. The remuneration compares favorably with that of industrial workers, who, at that time, were paid about 14 to 16 *leva* per day. The catch, however, is that "poor work" (as the decree terms it) is not paid at all: "payment has to be made only for effective work; poor work is not acceptable . . . in these cases the guilty persons must do the work once more." A recent decree by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers (broadcast over Radio Sofia on Janu-

ary 8, 1954) shows that the amount of payment and the manner in which it is made have not changed in the intervening years: "The remuneration for a brigade's work should be paid for work fulfilled, according to defined norms. . . . In order to insure a minimum salary for permanent employees, if the brigadier receives less than 350 *leva*, and the rest of the personnel less than 300 *leva*, the Ministry of Agriculture must pay the difference . . . as long as the employees are not responsible."

MTS workers perform the greater part of their duties on kolkhozes. Collectives depend entirely upon the stations for most of their machines and for the people to handle and repair them. MTS and kolkhozes therefore enter into yearly contracts for execution of previously-defined tasks. The collectives hire the men and machines and pay in kind, with part of their crop. Occasionally they also make cash payments. The amount is usually based on the type and amount of work performed, as well as on the size of the yield. On the whole, kolkhozes meet their obligations to MTS (for many of the functions pertaining to planning, plowing, sowing, cultivation and harvesting) with delivery of about 10 to 20 percent of their total crop. The following announcement of *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) of June 2, 1951, indicates the kind of levy imposed on collectives for only one of the tasks performed by tractor stations: "For harvesting the crop with combines, the stations are entitled to . . . nine percent of the threshed grain."

It follows that one of the prime functions of these stations is to act as government collection centers, used by the regimes as means of control over kolkhoz production. It is the MTS that check on the extent of the area to be plowed, the type of crop to be planted and the size of the yield realized. Tractor stations are therefore government tentacles reaching to the very core of the collectivized sector.

The following segment of a detailed tabulation which appeared in *Szabad Fold*, (Budapest) on March 14, 1954, shows the amount of pay extracted from various agricultural sectors by MTS:

Price Table for MTS\*

Type of Work	Kolkhozes type I		Kolkhozes type II & III		Individual Farmers		Plants & Institutions
	Wheat (kg)	forints	Wheat	forints	Wheat	forints	forints
<i>Plowing</i>							
a) 20 centimeters deep or less . . .	38	76	42	84	53	106	131
b) 21-22 cent. or less . . . . .	43	86	47	94	60	120	148
c) from 23-25 cent. deep . . . . .	48	96	53	106	67	134	165
d) from 26-30 cent. deep . . . . .	54	108	59	118	74	148	184
<i>Plowing of Fallow and Virgin Land</i>							
a) 20 centimeters or less . . . . .	45	90	50	100	62	124	154
b) 21-25 centimeters . . . . .	55	110	61	122	77	154	190
c) 26-30 centimeters . . . . .	66	132	73	146	92	184	226

\* Prices for tilling, sowing and crop protection work per cadastral acre (.58 hectare). Payment is either in kind or cash.



Despite the present concessionary attitude toward individual farmers, it is significant that the latter still have to pay 50 percent more than do kolkhozes. That is so because, apart from their purely technical functions, MTS also act as political spearheads.

## II. MTS As a Political Factor

The Khrushchev speech was a startling refutation of the Communist contention that collectivized agriculture is technically superior to individual farming. The speech reduced Communist advocacy of collectivization to its simplest—and truest—expression: it implied that the prime justification for forceful herding of millions of individual farmers into kolkhozes was that it enabled the regimes to control peasants economically, socially and politically. Until lately, this plan consisted of two simultaneous and inter-related parts—the destruction or elimination of private farmers and the creation of a collectivized sector.

Having learned their lesson from the bloody Russian experience of the 30's (when millions of farmers resisted collectivization by burning their farms and slaughtering their cattle), the Satellite regimes adopted more subtle techniques. More often than not, while they eliminated countless numbers of so-called kulaks, they used force indirectly, resorting to economic strangulation whenever they could. Their prime goal was making it impossible for individual farmers to remain independent, and for this, the Communists relied very heavily on MTS.

In every Satellite the tractor stations became depots for machinery "bought" from private farmers. The latter were progressively weakened by the various governments which, among other punitive measures, withheld fuel from them. The MTS were assigned the function of jackals who roamed the countryside, ready to pounce on any farmer whose economic plight forced him to part with his precious machinery at ridiculously low prices. In time, part of the pretense was dispensed with and laws were enacted to "purchase" the equipment with or without the farmer's consent. The regimes carefully refrained from releasing figures of such "payments," but refugee sources indicate that the process was close to outright confiscation.

The decree of the Presidium of the Bulgarian National Assembly (published in *Izgreiv* (Sofia) on June 27, 1950) is typical: "... All tractors and threshing machines of all models, complete with all equipment and spare parts owned by private farmers, are now being purchased and thus become public property." In Czechoslovakia, the process was described in the following manner in the 1951 issue (No. 7-8) of the official gazette of the agricultural academy (*Vestnik Ceskoslovenske akademie zemedelske*): "In order to prevent exploitation of smallholders and medium-size farmers, a compulsory purchase of tractors and important kulak machinery was ordered; within a short period about 4,000 tractors were bought ... as well 2,000 harvesters, 3,000 threshing machines, and 5,000 other machines." In Poland, the scheme was more devilishly simple. There, soon after the Communists took over, they formed so-called "Cooperative Machine Centers," where,



Title: The Poor Horse is Right

Caption: The horse: "You see how many men are repairing it. But if there is something wrong with me, you don't take me to the veterinarian, but begin to talk of sausages..."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), November 1, 1953

nominally at least, individual contributors owned their own machinery. Then, by a stroke of the pen (a resolution of the Presidium of the Government dated May 3, 1952), these centers were abolished as separate entities and incorporated into the MTS. As a result, these farmers lost both their machinery and what little independence they still possessed.

The role of MTS, however, was not only passive. As indicated above, each tractor center became the springboard for Party activity in rural areas. Each station contained a solid Party cadre, entrusted with the mission of propagandizing regime aims among the peasants while carrying out government programs as forcefully as possible. As a rule, the echelon of political control has its apex in the political department of the Ministry of Agriculture. Directly subordinate to this department is the political committee of the MTS directorate, whence authority spreads to the political committees of agricultural divisions within the district councils. The broad base of the pyramid is made up of the individual political agents (*politruks*) in each MTS. According to *Szabad Nep* (Budapest) of February 25, 1954, "The goal is to have at least one Communist Party member in each brigade. ... There must be a DISZ [Communist Youth League] group in every brigade."

The scope of the political mission was defined by Hungarian Minister of Agriculture Andras Hegedus and Party Secretary General Matyas Rakosi at a conference of MTS experts, reported in the *Szabad Nep* (Budapest) issues of March 13 and 15, 1954. The internal aspect was touched upon by Hegedus, when he said:

"The acquisition [by MTS personnel] of technical skills ... is not enough to attain the desired results. The MTS workers' political consciousness must be strengthened. This question must be stressed because we must not forget that our tasks must be carried out amid a struggle: in MTS, as in every field of life, a struggle is being waged for a victory of the new over the old.



Speculators, kulaks, former threshing machine and tractor owners, and tradesmen who employed apprentices, all these have been admitted to our machine stations. It was the MTS which deprived these elements of the means with which to carry out their exploitation. In most cases these people deliberately hinder the work of MTS and hamper their development. . . . Their exposure . . . and their removal from MTS requires hard and persistent political work. In order to be successful in this task, the machine stations must have strong . . . Party organizations."

Rakosi, on the other hand, harped on the MTS role in relation to individual peasants. His statement was made in carefully chosen words that, outwardly at least, fit into the pattern of present day "leniency." The following passage, however, leaves little doubt about the indoctrination side of the MTS mission:

"... I would like to emphasize the political significance of the work done by MTS. By doing a good job and winning the confidence of the toiling peasants, they also perform important political work. The village folk, the working peasants and kolkhoz members must get used to going to MTS not only when they need economic help. They must learn to regard the machine stations as political and cultural centers to which they may confidently turn at any time for advice and guidance."

The campaign of "persuasion-through-example" is of fairly recent vintage. Before the advent of the New Course, harsher words were spoken. In Czechoslovakia, for example, when private farmers in Zasovice requested that some machinery be returned to them so that they could increase production and meet norms, the curt reply given them (*Lidova Demokracie*, February 4, 1954), was that "the right to hold some [small] farm machines can be requested only by type I kolkhozes; you are therefore advised to establish such a collective immediately. . . [If you comply and] the machines were already transferred to the MTS, arrangements will be made to have them loaned to you for the duration of the harvest season."

### III. Spokes In the Wheel

Lack of machinery is not the only shortcoming interfering with MTS performance; many other equally grievous handicaps have long plagued the tractor stations, drastically impairing their efficiency.

#### I. Poor Quality of Machinery, Slipshod Repairs and Neglect

Machine Tractors Stations can function smoothly only if all available machinery is in good order and ready for service whenever needed. The premise that, because of the increases in equipment delivered to MTS, some of it could be held in reserve, does not apply, since each additional machine represents an increase in collectivization and a further shift of personnel from land to city. Thus, as early as 1948, an article in the Bulgarian periodical *Statistics* (Book 1-2, page 66) foresaw that "mechanization [in Bulgaria] . . . will enable 1,000,000 persons now active in agricultural work to be moved to the building of dams, power stations, railroads, highways, factories, etc." This

movement no doubt did take place and, as can be seen from the foregoing pronouncement, it was based on the assumption that an agricultural machine delivered is one more machine put to use. In actual practice, that is far from being the case. In every captive country, officials have complained time and time again of mechanical deficiencies, at the factory level, within the tractor stations or in actual field performance.

In some instances, the machines are of such poor quality that they fall to pieces before they even reach the fields. The following account appeared in *Rude Pravo* (Prague) on June 5, 1953:

"Weeders of the KUTS variety [now] at the Central MTS shops in Pribyslav, will be of no use to us. Their use for potato and beet crops in the lower parts of the country is difficult, but for us here in the mountainous area, they are quite useless. One of our best workers transported such a machine with greatest possible care over a distance of nine kilometers [approximately 6 miles] at the lowest possible speed. On the way, however, he lost many parts, and even the plowshares came off. To transport such a piece of machinery it would be necessary to load it on a trailer and send two people along to gather the parts dropped on the road."

When the machines finally reach their destination, they are soon out of commission, partly because MTS workers, being State employees with no financial or emotional attachment, use them negligently and fail to familiarize themselves with their mechanism, and partly because spare parts are either grossly misused or else unavailable altogether. On January 12, 1954, *Szabad Nep* (Budapest) complained editorially that "last year, at the time of deep plowing, 1,300 tractors stood idle at MTS, mainly because of negligent repair work." On August 5, 1953, Radio Budapest revealed that the majority of workers "do not know how to handle Russian agricultural machines, particularly the so-called Brezdik-type of threshing machines."

In Romania, the situation seems to have been even worse. On October 18, 1953, for instance, *Scinteia* (Bucharest) disclosed that in the Bucharest region "only a third of the existing tractors were at work," and that "recently many of them were defective and useless due to neglect." Only lately, on February 9, 1954, Radio Bucharest explained that:

"In past years, the percentage of increase in tractor and agricultural equipment production greatly exceeded that of spare parts production. Thus, if between 1950 and 1953 the tractor park increased approximately 250 percent, the manufacturing of the respective spare parts increased only 120 percent. Since not enough attention was paid by certain enterprises to the production of spare parts, a number of tractors and agricultural machines were immobilized, as they could not be repaired. . . ."

What this means in terms of performance by individual tractor stations is explained in a comment in *Kooperativno Zemedelie* (Sofia) No. 217, 1953, to the effect that "the plan for the MTS in Silistra in September was fulfilled by only 7 percent, instead of 70 percent set up in the relevant charts." The writer added this telling remark: "Under the direction of Ivan Kunev, this station

had only three tractors for deep plowing in the month of September—out of 13!" The same source discloses that in the village of Lambrinovo, where machines were stored, "grass was growing all over the equipment." There is an endless stream of such complaints emanating from official Communist sources; the regime press obviously lacks the space to print all complaints on the topic. A typical example of these daily reprimands run as follows: "Reaper No. 410 belonging to the MTS of the village of Glavinitsa, Tutrakan County, was abandoned in the fields of Zafirovo village, where it is rusting and deteriorating day by day; it has stayed in the place where the tractor brigade . . . left it at the end of the harvesting season" (*Kooperativno Zemedelie* [Sofia] No. 235, 1954).



"What will you say, men, when spring asks you what you have been doing all winter?"

*Rolnicke Hlasy* (Prague), November 1, 1952

What Hegedus was actually referring to when he talked of "lack of political consciousness" among the rank and file members of MTS (in the speech quoted above), is in fact a deep-rooted refusal to swallow the regime's dictum that what belongs to the State is *ipso facto* theirs, and should be treated as such. In a sense, these civil servants are indeed saboteurs; for, having been robbed of their pride and all sense of personal achievement, their attitude toward work, toward the machines and the endless "plans," is bound to be a compound of apathy, irresponsibility and downright hostility. A Hungarian refugee who used to be employed at the Szekesfehervar machine repair plant mentions a number of incidents that convincingly illustrate this spirit. He tells of how one of his colleagues, who worked at a tractor station, saw drivers connect two tractors of different make with heavy chains. After a while he noticed that they had started both engines and were experimenting to see which tractor could pull the other—each straining in opposite directions. "By playing these and similar tricks, MTS members damaged State property," the exile commented, adding, "I frequently repaired machines on which shifts or steering wheels had been deliberately tampered with." The implications of this private report appears to be substantiated by an official admission in *Szabad Nep* (Budapest) of March 4, 1953, to the effect that "The machine station at Abony completed the plowing of 60 acres with 29 machines during the last 5 days. . . . This means that the daily quota for one trac-

tor is 0.4 acres: a pair of horses can plow that much in a day." Considering that in the old days peasants could plow at least three times the territory mentioned in the paper, it is evident that either a considerable portion of the machinery was not in working order or that the workers did not use them; the truth is probably a combination of the two.

## 2. Kolkhoz Resistance

Personnel trouble is not restricted to MTS workers alone. In the collectives too, many of the members consider their own welfare to be diametrically opposed to regime aims. Since MTS are government instruments of control and exploitation, many of the peasants view them with open hostility. The crux of the matter is that kolkhozes have to pay very heavily in crop deliveries for services performed by the stations. Many collectives therefore prefer to do the work themselves to keep as much as possible of the crop for distribution among members—after compulsory State levies have been taken care of.

The Czechoslovak Deputy Minister of Agriculture, J. Nepomucky, referred to this problem in an article published in *Zemelske Noviny* (Prague) of February 24, 1954, by stating: "We [the regime] must abolish the theory prevailing in some kolkhozes with reference to the high cost of MTS. . . . [Kolkhozes must abandon] the idea of trying to do all the work on their own, even at the cost of not keeping agrotechnical deadlines." If it were only the collectives which resisted the hiring of MTS machinery, the matter might be settled by granting more power to the stations. It appears, however, that on many occasions the MTS are in full sympathy with the peasants and do not burden them with exorbitant contracts. Thus, on March 10, 1954, Radio Budapest waxed angry over this inefficiency, lamenting that "The signing of contracts was neglected by the greater part of MTS. . . . They have no objection when certain kolkhozes want to sign contracts for very little machine work, so that, for instance, the Ezuestkalasz kolkhoz at Mezotarkany signed a contract for only sowing and harvesting."

High payment is not the only reason peasants resist the extensive use of machinery. Even more vital is the fear that machinery will displace them as peasants. The fear is realistic and, historically speaking, has been a cause of friction in nearly all industrial countries. In Communist-run nations, however, the problem is aggravated by numerous political factors. For instance, the peasant who has to leave for the city (or, more exactly, the peasant who is sent there by the regime) is placed where he is deemed most needed. He has very little choice in the matter: once his rural anchor is cut loose, the government is master of his fate. And once in the industrial sector, though his pay may be somewhat higher, being unskilled, the peasant is often forced to accept the most arduous and unappealing occupations. The regimes cannot, of course, admit these tragic truths; yet, on June 30, 1951, *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) quoted peasants in the village of Letnitsa as having greeted the arrival of combines with the contention that "The machines will work and we will starve; there

will be no work for us." This Luddite type of rebelliousness can only be countered with tact, patience and respect for the peasant's genuine grievances, but in the past Communists have usually resorted to a program of indirect force, backed by statistics and carried out by MTS agitators.

### 3. Neglect of Worker Welfare

That peasants (both individual farmers and kolkhoz members) were exploited by the regimes, seemed almost inevitable in the context of perennial plans for frantic speed-ups in industrialization. But the same reasoning cannot be applied to MTS members. They form part of an organization which is nothing less than a State monopoly for the mechanization of the collective sector of the economy. They are State employees who, until recently, were State agents charged with the task of bringing refractory peasants into kolkhozes; it is largely upon their work that collectives depend for the fulfillment of their assignments. As *Scinteia* (Bucharest) of December 29, 1953, put it, "MTS are powerful levers of the People's Democratic State in the villages; theirs is the tremendously important role of consolidating the alliance between the worker and peasant classes in a common socialist organization of agricultural production." It could therefore be expected that MTS employees would enjoy privileges not granted to others, and that their standard of living would be far higher than that of either individual farmers or kolkhoz peasants. And indeed, in one respect—in the amount of pay they receive—they do appear to be better off. But from nearly all other angles their lot seems to be as miserable as that of other sections of the population.

The following is part of a broadcast by Geza Gazda, a Kossuth Prize Winner, speaking over Radio Budapest on March 10, 1954: "An exceedingly long and severe winter compelled our workers at some MTS to fulfill their tasks in unheated sheds, in cold and snow, working twelve hours a day." In Summer, however, the situation was no better, for on July 10, 1953, Radio Budapest, referring to the machine station at Kaposvar, mentioned that "... fre-

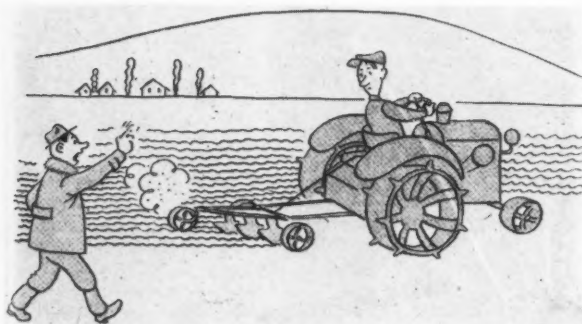
quently a meal for 25 men is distributed among 40; consequently they all remain hungry. . . . The men are not supplied with work clothes . . . not a single pair of protective glasses has been given to the threshing machine operators." In Romania, *Scinteia* of August 30, 1953 attributed the "partial use of MTS working capacity" to callous disregard by local councils in providing tolerable working conditions for tractor station employees. By March 3, 1954, the situation had obviously not been remedied, for Radio Bucharest found it necessary on that day to announce that "cases have been noted of MTS directors neglecting the problems of food and housing for tractor operators." In Czechoslovakia, *Nova Svoboda* (Ostrava) of October 3, 1953, commented that tractor drivers at Krnov had not had a place to get their food—ever since the previous spring!

### 4. Bureaucracy, Mismanagement and Frauds

Some of the mishandling of both workers and machines might be ascribed to a deliberate neglect of the rural sector—particularly in pre-New Course days. Many of the shortcomings, however, are inherent in the very nature and form of totalitarian organization. In every sphere of life, Communist-run countries are shot through with pettiness, paper work and incompetence, all of which is best expressed by the term "bureaucracy." This state of affairs is particularly acute in those sectors of the economy which, like MTS, are functionally and geographically furthest removed from urban centers of control. Orders which originate in Ministries travel a circuitous route through dozens of Party and government echelons before they ever reach the locus of practical decision and implementation. Very often these orders are highly unrealistic and cannot be enforced; on many occasions they are too general and fail to take into account the uniqueness of a specific situation; more often than not they are contradictory and cause chaos.

An example of such conspicuous waste caused by remote swivel-chair planning was described by a Czechoslovak exile, formerly a member of the Broumov MTS. The refugee tells how private farmers had their machinery confiscated and how, by a government edict, they were instructed to bring the machines to an open space near the main MTS building. The instructions unfortunately did not include provisions for the erection of a shed to house the property. When the former tractor driver escaped in 1953—years after the "transfer" had taken place—a huge and by then rusty and totally unserviceable pile of machinery was still to be seen out in the open, right next to the administrative building.

To counteract this apathy on the local level, the regimes resort to the classic device of issuing yet more instructions. Though lately some real incentives have been granted, generally speaking the governments find it more convenient to arrive at "decisions." Radio Bucharest of February 3, 1954, for instance, broadcast the following decision by the Council of Ministers: "We must fight the tendency displayed by some managements of MTS centers . . . to wait with folded arms for everything to be done from the top."



Title: Where deep plowing is too shallow.

Caption: "Don't you hear the soil giggling?"  
"Why should it be?"  
"Because you're only tickling it."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), September 15, 1953





Title: "The Chains of the Sliven MTS"

Caption: The MTS of Sliven, under Director Apostol Diankoff and political head Gencho Dimitrov, is one of the last places to fulfill the fall plowing and sowing Plan.

In the cartoon, a man holds a sign at the window: "S.O.S. We can't fulfill the plan." The plan serves as a smoke stack releasing hot air. On the tractor treads are inscribed: poor leadership, poor repair, capitulation, nonqualified cadres, inconstant work, delayed repairs, without planning, poor control.

*Za Kooperativno Zemedelie* (Sofia), No. 223, 1953

On March 3, the same station spelled out instances of incompetence and mismanagement by scoring MTS which "delayed the signing of contracts with kolkhozes;" . . . which "concluded contracts only for plowing, neglecting other work which could be taken on. . . ." The broadcast also referred to "serious shortcomings connected with the organization of labor," and stressed that every farm was entitled to request that ineffective work be done once more, until, that is, the contract terms are met.

Sometimes regimes adopt a tougher policy, as was the case in Hungary when, under a March 2, 1953 heading, "Negligent Managers of Three MTS Put on Trial," *Szabad Nep* reported that "Criminal proceedings have been started against the managers of the Ujfalú, Hencida and Alsomera machine stations on charges of having failed to repair machines and for other criminal negligence." A Hungarian refugee report of May 1953 indicates, however, that managers often have their hands tied—by bureaucratic strings. He states that "real trouble" started when, in the second half of 1951, partly completed but already operating MTS realized that "a great many of them would not have electricity for many years to come." The exile explains that at that time there was a lack of transformers in Hungary but even more important was the fact that, as he put it, "The stations were planned in such a manner that construction would be completed within 3-4 years; however, as time went by, plans were constantly being changed, and hardly any sta-

tion was completed; the electric network was to be centrally controlled from the office building . . . in many cases, the office building has not been completed even today."

Wherever and whenever they can, the Communists establish elaborate systems of checks and counter-checks among various types of organizations, all of which have their power-apex in the highest organs of the Party. Thus, in theory at least, while MTS control kolkhozes, they are in turn "checked" by the factories that supply them with their machinery and the heavy workshops that do the type of repairing which cannot be handled on the spot. If, for instance, in the case cited above, the worker at the repair shop who handled the two "sabotaged" tractors had been a Communist, the men responsible would most probably have been in considerable trouble. The checking, or more accurately, the mutual snooping, is however very often disregarded and, presumably as a reaction against it, organizations restrict themselves to the bare essentials of their work.

Occasionally, mismanagement, neglect and faulty paper work combine to create almost ludicrous effects. On July 4, 1953, *Zemedselke Noviny* explained that "all over the Republic MTS are being checked with respect to their preparedness for harvesting." As a result of this stock-taking, it was found that "Not a single MTS in the Plzen region has an automatic binder of the No. 1, 2 and 3 types." The paper added the rueful comment that these machines had "disappeared." "If it were just a screw, or a small blade—but one cannot hide a whole automatic binder in one's pocket. . . . An entire automatic threshing machine was missing at the Stribro MTS."

Collusion also takes place between organizations which officially should be watching each other. *Zemedselke Noviny* of July 29, 1953, tells how a kolkhoz chairman in the Kresin-Lovosice district, who was looking for a ball bearing to be used on a threshing machine, went to the nearest MTS, where he was informed by the warehouse manager that there weren't any available. The chairman then whispered something into the official's ears and produced a bagful of spring potatoes that he had been wise enough to bring along. "Within ten minutes, the ball bearing was found." A good many people will help each other (and incidentally engage in black market operations) at the expense of the regime. Nowhere is such anti-regime cooperation as striking as in the numerous "fraudulent" reports made with respect to "results" achieved in the "Socialist competitions," the crude speed-up device so often invoked by the regimes. The following account was taken from *Praca* (Bratislava) of February 14, 1954:

"Comrades of the MTS at Trnava were recently furious at members of the Piestany station. At the crucial moment, when the plan was about to be fulfilled 100 percent, the Piestany people, in order to be first [in the "Socialist competition"] reported an amount of acreage as tilled when, in fact, no tilling had been done. This was found out by members of the Trnava station, and they visited the Piestany center and ascertained that the management had . . . advised all subordinate centers how to falsify the facts. . . . The Piestany comrades de-



ceived the Trnava members, but the latter soon forgot their anger. Piestany functionaries asked the Trnava boys not to make any fuss, and the latter agreed—that is true comradeship!"

## 5. Personnel Problems

Many headaches experienced by MTS directors would disappear if competent personnel were available. Here again, until the advent of the New Course, the most reliable and best-trained people were sent into heavy industry almost automatically, so that the stations had to be satisfied with hastily-trained kolkhoz recruits, most of them youngsters. "The importance of mechanization is enhanced," writes *Rude Pravo* (Prague) of December 17, 1953, by the fact that we do not have a sufficient amount of trained personnel in agriculture." And no wonder, since (as revealed by *Zemedelske Noviny* [Prague] of February 11, 1954) "the recruitment to the four-month classes for combine operators has been fulfilled by only 33 percent and that of tractor drivers by 55 percent." It appears that the difficulty is that kolkhozes refuse to part with their members:

"Members of the Hlince kolkhoz had to decide whether they would send one of their boys for training. This would seem quite a natural and ordinary matter. But that is not so. The members were afraid to lose manpower; only after long discussions did they decide to send Comrade Tosnovsky. But actually they were afraid of what their fellow members would say." (*Nova Svoboda* [Ostrava] September 6, 1953).

Since in the past able-bodied men either refused to be transferred to MTS or were not released from other occupations, the regimes had to glorify the work in order to make it attractive to women. Hence, announcements such as "Comrade R. Silverstrova in Pisečna near Dacice . . . after finishing her five-month course . . . will become a driver for the Soviet combine Stalinec . . . again another girl in a job which would have been barred to her in a capitalist country," which appeared in *Mlada Fronta* (Prague) of May 1, 1953.



Title: Improperly conditioned machines cause undue waste of time.

Caption: "Franus! This time we are lucky. We have the means to pull it!"

*Szpilki* (Warsaw), December 13, 1953

In spite of such urgings, the recruits appear to be a motley crew. The February 1954 bulletin of the Czechoslovak Central Council of Trade Unions stated that the average age of a tractor driver was 20. "Among these adolescents there are many unskilled workers without the least experience in operating tractors or performing farm work." The "lack of experience" is attributable not only to their tender age and the brevity of the courses, but also to the kind of instruction they receive. *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) of February 7, 1954, published a revealing article on "Poor Training of Rural Cadres." The paper mentions that technical schools "do not teach students how to use agricultural machines," that the wrong subjects are taught to the wrong people, that equipment and facilities are lacking ("one school with more than 100 students has only one classroom at its disposal"), and that good instructors look for work elsewhere.

## IV. Regime Remedies

Regime measures to improve the quality of MTS service fall into three broad categories. One kind of remedy consists in the exercise of traditional "self criticism"—that is, errors are pointed out and "discussed" and the inevitable series of new decrees, pious resolutions, orders and counter-orders are then printed and proclaimed, only to be filed and forgotten. The second type of "reform" consists of palliatives that might help temporarily. Finally, with the New Course stress on agricultural production, some more far-reaching efforts have been made.

Among the seemingly ineffectual paper resolutions and mere exhortations one has to include many of the results to come out of the numerous MTS conferences that have lately taken place throughout the area. A great number of measures with respect to poor repair work, slack discipline, neglect, bureaucracy, mismanagement, etc., are patently propaganda moves only. Some of these statements are in fact little more than feats of fatuous pomposity. On December 10, 1953, *Trud*, the organ of Bulgarian Trade Unions, explained the intricacies of a new "specialization method," which consists in "using the workers according to their qualifications." The paper said that "repair shop managers must daily follow fulfillment of the repair plan by dividing the work day into five periods. . . . Every day . . . a short conference is to be held at which the tasks for the following day should be outlined."

In the other countries, too, many of the "new" devices are merely heavier doses of bureaucratic interference. On March 5, 1954—to cite only one of numerous such measures—Radio Bucharest broadcast the text of a government decision on the spring agricultural campaign. Part of it ran as follows: "The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministries of Metallurgy and Machine-Building and the executive committees of regional people's councils shall ensure that, by March 10 of this year, regional commissions composed of mechanical engineers, mechanical foremen and electromechanics shall be formed to check on the quality of repair work carried out at machine centers, MTS, State Farms and units of other Ministries which

are repairing tractors, motors and agricultural equipment, as well as [to check on] the manner in which the repair commissions at each unit are fulfilling their obligations." This sort of verbiage was also directed at an encouragement of "Socialist competitions."

Palliatives have been introduced in the form of moderate pay increases, better educational facilities, a greater emphasis on spare parts production, a simplified organizational setup in some countries, a smoother recruitment service and a cessation of the practice of transferring the best qualified experts to the cities. On February 6, 1954, for instance, Radio Bucharest announced that the "Directorate General of Machine Building" has taken steps to insure production of spare parts "on the principle that the plants producing the various agricultural machines also produce the respective spare parts." This seems to be logical enough and might help; whether it will double the 1953 production target (as the broadcast said it would) remains to be seen. Another measure which, if carried out, might result in more and better work, was the Polish resolution of the Council of Ministers of February 23 (published in *Trybuna Ludu* [Warsaw] of March 7, 1954), which introduced changes in the wage system for tractor operators and brigadiers, the better to synchronize their wages with production results in kolkhozes. The same resolution also mentions that MTS investments in Poland will jump from 355,600,000 *zloty* for 1953, to 506,000,000 *zloty* in 1954. It is interesting that this resolution also stipulates that MTS should help farmers "on the principle of a temporary elimination of individual farm boundaries for the purpose of applying mechanical methods of cultivation." In view of the fact that collectivization appears to be intensified once again in Poland, this measure is probably not meant to be "temporary"—rather, it seems to be a return to the old practice of using machinery to herd peasants into kolkhozes.

An interesting innovation is the so-called "Patronage System" recently introduced in Hungary. The plan calls for a factory to become the "patron" or sponsor of one or two MTS by signing contracts with them and sending workers to help out at the station. This effort by experts might improve the quality of MTS work if they are the right type of people. Indications are, however, that very often the patrons know less about machinery than do the MTS workers themselves. Concerns like the Balaton Steamship Enterprise, the Municipal trolley car system, the Obuda shipyards, the Budapest Flax Spinning Mill, and the Hatvan Sugar Factory all have little in common with tractor production and the value of their help is open to question.

This last-named measure nevertheless illustrates one phase of the MTS reform movement that appears to be of a more serious nature. It shows that the regimes are now trying (however falteringly) to convert the MTS into genuinely technical centers, fully equipped to carry out their mission. This does not mean that all political power will be taken away from the stations, but it does entail a change of emphasis in the importance of political and economic functions. Until recently, the political mis-

## Ahol félreértik az emberrel való gondoskodást

(Horgos János, a csakvári gépállomás főagronómusa ma délután a szobájában. A javítóműhely bezzeg olyan hideg, hogy a traktorosok majdnem megfagynak...)



Title: Concern for the people misinterpreted

Caption: (Janos Horgos, head agronomist of the Csakvar MTS is roasting in his room, but it is so cold in the repair shop that the tractor operators are freezing). The tractor operators say: "That won't keep us warm!"

*Szabad Fold* (Budapest), February 7, 1954

sion—discrimination against the individual peasant and encouragement and consolidation of kolkhozes—ranked first in the order of priority. With the advent of the New Course, it is now the technical, the production-side of MTS work that is being stressed.

In two countries—Hungary and Bulgaria—the political function of MTS has been officially transferred to regional councils. Thus, *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) of October 14, 1953, stated that "The political departments of MTS must be closed, and the leadership of Party work in the MTS and kolkhozes must be taken over by the county committees of the Party. . . . The position of deputy director in charge of political affairs, must also be abolished." In the other countries the change has not been quite as pronounced, but in all of them there is ample evidence of an influx of technicians that, if continued on the present scale for the next few months, would appreciably alter the personnel composition at the stations. In Romania, for example, Radio Bucharest informed its listeners on March 16, 1954, that workers and engineers of Bucharest plants are "declaring themselves ready to go to the land and help increase agricultural production." In Bulgaria, a similar movement is afoot and on October 20, 1953, *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) announced that all Army tank personnel would have to report for work as tractor drivers on completion of their military service. The most extensive movement (which still does not amount to a major shift in personnel) seems to have taken place in Hungary, where—according to *Szabad Nep* (Budapest) of February 24, 1954—Minister of Agriculture Hegedus announced that "tens of thousands" of industrial workers would be transferred to the land. By a decree of November 28, 1953 (broadcast over Radio Budapest), managers

## Rátapintott a hibára

(A Seregelyes gépalomában minden traktort és vontatót szétszedtek, úgy, hogy még alkatrészeit sem tudnak bemenni Fehérvárra.)



Title: He hit the nail on the head.

Caption: At the Seregelyes machine station, all the tractors and haulers have been taken apart and now they cannot even go into Fehérvár to fetch spare parts.

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), March 15, 1954

of all enterprises, except those of coal, metal, bauxite mines and foundries, must release former tractor drivers who are willing to return to their old MTS employment. On February 11, 1954, *Nepszava* (Budapest) reported that 93 skilled industrial workers had left the capital to take up jobs in MTS.

It is true, of course, that urban workers are probably closer to the Party than the peasants, that the proportion of Communists among them is greater and that, therefore, their transfer to the countryside might represent a tightening of Party control over the rural sector. That may well turn out to be so in the long run; at the moment, however, the stress is on more production and the workers seem to have been dispatched primarily as technicians rather than as political agents. This is most clearly seen in regime policy toward individual peasants, for in this respect the function of MTS has been radically changed. While in former days the private farmer was curtly told

to betake himself into a collective if he wanted to use machinery, the present line is to encourage him to use MTS services.

In this context too, the reversal of policy was sharpest in Hungary. In a speech delivered on March 13, 1954—and broadcast over Radio Budapest—Party Secretary General Matyas Rakosi said that: "According to the resolution of our Party and government, this year the tractor stations will accomplish seven times more work for the individual peasants than last year! It follows that tens of thousands of independent farmers will make use of the stations for the first time this year. . . . These peasants must not acquire unfavorable experiences or be disillusioned." The Party boss had good reasons to be worried on this score, for on January 15, Radio Budapest had had a Party theoretician explain that officials were so bewildered by the turn of events that "in some places, for example at MTS, a certain resistance is to be noticed as far as the help given to individual farmers is concerned." In other countries, the reverse is true; it is the individual farmer who is suspicious of the MTS and refuses to hire their services. Reviewing the agricultural situation, Radio Bucharest of March 13 said that "agitators should urge individual farmers to conclude contracts with MTS."

In the final analysis, none of the measures will bear fruit unless more machines are produced in the immediate future. As was shown in the introductory table, MTS have had increasing difficulties in taking care of a fast-growing collectivized sector. Even though collectivization has been slowed down, stopped, or, as in Hungary, actually reduced, the task ahead, entailing as it does increasing service for individual farmers and a more thorough cooperation with kolkhozes, is more formidable than ever. As far as can be determined from the little statistical information available, the present plans for the near future consist in an intensification of policies pursued over the last couple of years: the number of stations will not increase appreciably, but every effort will probably be made to add to the number of machines. This process is illustrated in the table below:

Country	No. of MTS					No. of Tractors (in 15 hp) in MTS				
	'50	'51	'52	'53	'54	'50	'51	'52	'53	'54
Romania	138 <sup>1</sup>	188 <sup>2</sup>	218 <sup>3</sup>	218 <sup>4</sup>	250 <sup>5</sup>	6,100 <sup>1</sup>	7,009 <sup>2</sup>	9,000 <sup>3</sup>	10,000 <sup>4</sup>	12,500 <sup>5</sup>
Poland	156 <sup>6</sup>	260 <sup>7</sup>	325 <sup>8</sup>	401 <sup>9</sup>	460 <sup>10</sup>	4,675 <sup>6</sup>	9,325 <sup>7</sup>	—	16,400 <sup>9</sup>	19,700 <sup>10</sup>
Hungary	361 <sup>11</sup>	—	400 <sup>12</sup>	—	500 <sup>13</sup>	7,398 <sup>14</sup>	9,700 <sup>15</sup>	10,170 <sup>16</sup>	—	20,000 <sup>17</sup>
Bulgaria	96 <sup>18</sup>	115 <sup>18</sup>	144 <sup>18</sup>	149 <sup>18</sup>	150 <sup>19</sup>	8,657 <sup>18</sup>	11,350 <sup>18</sup>	12,295 <sup>18</sup>	13,051 <sup>18</sup>	15,302 <sup>19</sup>

1. Agerpress, January 4, 1954; 2. *Viata Capitalei* (Bucharest) August 31, 1951—figures are planned goal for year; 3. Speech by Gheorghiu-Dej, August 23, 1953; 4. *Scinteia* (Bucharest) December 28, 1953; 5. Planned goal for autumn announced by Radio Bucharest December 19, 1953; 6. *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw) January 18, 1951; 7. *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw) January 26, 1952; 8. *Trybuna Ludu*, January 29, 1952; 9. *Trybuna Ludu*, February 6, 1954; 10. Bierut's speech, *Trybuna Ludu*, March 11, 1954; 11. Matyas Rakosi, *Szabad Nep*, February 26, 1951; 12. Estimate on the basis of Gero's speech, *Szabad Nep*, May 3, 1953; 13. *Magyar Nép gazdaság Oteves Terve* (Five Year Plan of the Hungarian People's Economy) Budapest, Szikra printing office, 1949—figure is goal for plan; 14. *Gazdaságpolitikai Tajekoztató*, January 1952; 15. Same as 14; 16. Gabor Soos: *Novenytermelésünk* (Our Crop Production) — (Budapest), 1952; 17. Same as 13; 18. *Handbook of the Agitator* (Sofia) #36, Dec. 1953, p. 15; 19. *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), April 9, 1954.

As can be seen from the table above, there has been a relative stagnation in the number of tractor centers in the last few years and, although an expansion is planned, it is not spectacular. As for the machinery, though past growth was considerable, it was obviously not commensurate with the tasks assigned, and future plans call for an acceleration in the tempo of machine delivery to MTS. But the process is bound to be slow, particularly in view of the fact that no major shifts in investment have taken place.

What, then, is the outlook for the future? Until MTS

are properly equipped, until their personnel is better trained, until a more efficient organization is devised, the main productive effort will have to fall—now more than ever before—on the shoulders of the individual producer. But even in the long run, if all tangible deficiencies are ever remedied—which is highly improbable—Machine Tractor Stations will forever bear the stigma of their function as regime tools. As such, they will never release the potentialities of a free land, tilled by free men proud of their achievement, self-reliant and productive as no Communist-run State organ can ever be.

## *TV Launched in Hungary*

The first television shown in Hungary was hailed as a triumph by the Communist press despite admitted "weaknesses" of the receiver (manufactured in East Germany). *Beke es Szabadsag* (Budapest), January 20, stated that "receivers made abroad—except for those made in the Soviet Union—are not suited for receiving Hungarian telecasts." The Orion Plant in Hungary will start to manufacture television sets in 1955, added the magazine.

The experimental show presented, to an invitation audience, the following program: a scene from the Budapest meeting of the World Council of Peace; a combine reaping near the city of Kunszentmarton; Paul Ulicska, the Stakhanovist Brigade leader of the Lorinci Hengermy Plant; the pupils of the girls' high school in Szekesfehervar writing a letter to Paul Robeson.

*Beke es Szabadsag's* article tried to dispel some of the "popular misconceptions" about television, assuring readers that television has nothing to do with X-Ray; that the receiver does not shoot invisible rays at the spectators; no television sickness or television poisoning of any kind exists; the television receiver can give only the program of the studio and cannot be "directed" to a certain theater performance or sports match; and, finally, nobody in bed can see what the weather is like out of doors with the help of TV!



# Internal Trade and Consumer Goods in Poland

*This is the first of a series of articles on internal trade and consumer goods in the Satellite countries. If the New Course is to function these are crucial areas in which to watch developments.*

AS IN every Soviet bloc country, the expansion and improvement of consumer goods production and retail distribution networks have been primary New Course targets for Poland. Along with improvement of agricultural production, these primary topics were discussed at the Ninth Party Plenum (October 1953) and at the Second Party Congress (March 1954). Party policy on these subjects was contained in the speeches of former Premier, and now first Party Secretary, Bierut (October 30, 1953 and March 10, 1954) and of Vice Premier Hilary Minc (March 13, 1954), as well as in the Party resolution issued at the conclusion of the Second Party Congress (March 22, 1954).

In his October 30 speech (*Zycie Warszawy* [Warsaw], November 3), Bierut stated that Poland's national income was now twice the 1938 figure<sup>1</sup>, that the real income of non-agricultural inhabitants had gone up about 36 percent since 1938 and 15 percent since 1949<sup>2</sup> while that for rural



Caption: "A hook! I couldn't buy one in thirty stores and finally I found one—in the bread!"

*Szpilki* (Warsaw), April 4, 1954

inhabitants had increased over 75 percent since 1938 and 20 percent since 1949. For the next two years (1954-55), Bierut declared that a further 15 percent increase was projected. For example, the income of the peasantry was expected to rise some 3 billion *zloty* during 1954, an increase to be achieved principally through increased purchase prices of farm commodities, increased farm production, augmented social services, and through price cuts of consumer products. This intended rise in the peasant income was to stimulate increased commodity production. The peasant, presumably, would in turn buy more consumer goods and equipment with his augmented income.

## I. Consumer Goods

In his March 10 speech (Radio Warsaw), Bierut revealed that "the production of consumer goods by Socialist industry in 1953 was 219.8 percent of the 1949 level, while the Six Year Plan target for 1953 was 205.3 percent." He added: "... this means that the production of consumer goods, although insufficient in relation to the ever-growing needs of the people, surpassed the planned 1953 level by 7.1 percent."

<sup>1</sup> The figure given for 1938 is for the old area of Poland.

<sup>2</sup> These figures were later modified in the resolutions that followed the Second Party Congress. The figures given then were that real income for non-agricultural inhabitants had gone up 36 to 42 percent since 1938 and 15 to 20 percent since 1949.

## Development of Industrial Production of Socialist Industry<sup>1</sup>

	Total Production		Producer Goods			Consumer Goods		
	Index	Value <sup>2</sup>	Index	Value <sup>2</sup>	% of Total	Index	Value <sup>2</sup>	% of Total
1949 .....	100.0	16.98	100.0	9.31	54.8	100.0	7.67	45.2
1950 .....	130.8	22.21	—	—	—	—	—	—
1951 .....	162.7	27.63	—	—	—	—	—	—
1952 <sup>3</sup> .....	194.5	33.03	—	—	—	—	—	—
1953 Original Plan .....	197.1	33.47	190.2	17.71	52.9	205.3	15.75	47.1
1953 Revised Plan .....	220.0	37.36	230.3	21.44	57.3	207.9	15.95	42.7
1953 .....	228.6	38.82	236.1	21.98	56.6	219.8	16.86	43.4

The above chart reveals that although the value of consumer goods production for 1953 greatly exceeded the original 1953 goal as set forth under the Six Year Plan, producer (heavy industrial) goods production showed an even more substantial increase. Further, it is noted that the production ratio of consumer to producer goods for 1953 has been more greatly accentuated in favor of producer goods production than in 1949, or than projected under the original 1953 Plan. However, the ratio did not reach the proportion projected under the revised 1953 Plan, which called for even greater emphasis on producer goods production. This slight shift toward consumer goods production during the latter part of 1953 was one of the results of the New Course policies.

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Index numbers were taken from Bierut's March 10 speech before the Second Party Congress (*Nowe Drogi*, March 1954). The 1949 figure for the value of total industrial production was computed by taking the projected value planned for 1955 under the original Six Year Plan (*Polish Journal of Law* No. 37, 1950), 43.8 billion *zlotys*, and dividing it by the projected index number of 258 for 1955. Bierut also gave the 1953 increase in total industrial production as 118 percent from which the 1949 figure for total industrial production of 17.81 billion *zlotys* was computed. Total industrial production during 1953, and that of the "Socialist" sector are almost the same, because private production is negligible. In his speech before the Seventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party (*Nowe Drogi*, June 1952), Bierut stated that heavy industrial production in 1949 was equal to 52.3 percent of total industrial production. (This revised the original Six Year Plan figure of 59.1 percent devoted to heavy industry in 1949.) Therefore, total 1949 production for heavy industry was 9.31 billion *zlotys*, while that for light industry was 8.5 billion. All heavy industrial production during 1949 was in the "Socialist" sector. Therefore, total production of producer goods (heavy industry) and total producer goods produced within the "Socialist" sector in 1949 were the same and equal. Polish Vice-Premier Minc, in his speech before the Party Congress on March 13, 1954 (*Radio Warsaw*, March 16, 1954), stated that in 1953 the total production of consumer goods had gone up 99 percent as compared with 1949. That would mean that total consumer goods production during 1953 was equal to approximately 16.9 billion *zlotys* at 1949 prices. The figures for the Revised 1953 Plan were computed by taking the 1953 plan fulfillment statistics (as reported over *Radio Warsaw*, February 5, 1954) and dividing them into the 1953 actual production statistics.

<sup>2</sup> All values are given in billions of *zloty* at 1949 prices. All figures are rounded to the nearest hundredth and are not forced to add.

<sup>3</sup> In his June 1952 speech before the Seventh Plenum of the Party, Bierut had given the 1952 planned index for industrial production of "Socialist" industry as 199. 1952 fulfillment for industrial production was therefore somewhat below the 1952 planned level (*Inwestycje i Budownictwo*, January 1953).

At the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party and again during the Second Party Congress, Bierut delivered several speeches calling for increased consumer goods production.<sup>1</sup> Both times he called for a percentage increase for 1955 above that for 1953. The following chart compares the October (pre-Congress) figures with the March (post-Congress) figures and with the actual percentage production increases reported for 1953. The most substantial differences between the October and March figures occurred in the projected increases in industrial consumer goods production: radio receivers, motorcycles, bicycles, etc. These goods require raw materials and productive facilities that could also be used to fabricate producer goods. It must, therefore, be assumed that additional materials and facilities were shifted to consumer goods production between October 1953 and March 1954.

Although the regime has made extravagant claims concerning the extent of the changeover to consumer goods production, the chart below indicates that the projected two year increases for 1955 are in some cases no greater than the reported annual increase for 1953 and in other cases less.

The projected increase in canned fish production was upped six percent and further increase in bread production was also scheduled. (Increased areas have been sown to bread grains throughout the Soviet orbit.) Although Poland has recently been forced to import bread grains, it should become self-sufficient once more by 1955. In the cases of bread, fats and canned fish, no 1953 Plan results were given. This is usually the case when production results are below the previous year's. Projected 1955 increases are not likely to bring production for those commodities up to more than the 1952 level. While meat production was reported to have increased some 25 percent over the 1952 level, Bierut admitted in his March 10 speech

<sup>1</sup> In industrial production a distinction is drawn between heavy and light industries. Heavy industry includes all branches which manufacture producer goods. They are: foundries, metals, coals, some branches of chemicals and minerals, and the production of electrical energy for industry. The term producer goods is applied to all goods which serve the needs of industrial or agricultural production, as, for example, machines, tools, energy, raw materials, etc. Light industry consists of all branches which produce consumer goods articles or articles for everyday use. In this category belong food processing, textiles, leather, wood, some branches of mineral and chemical manufacture (salt, soap, etc.), paper, and printing. (Maria Czekanska, *Polish Geography* [Warsaw], 1951.)

that the 1953 Plan was underfulfilled by 27 percent. A projected 17 percent increase during the next two years would therefore still leave 1955 meat production below the 1953 planned level.

#### Planned Increases in Production Over 1953<sup>1</sup>

Commodity	% Increase 1953 Over 1952	1955 Goal	
		Pre- Congress (Oct. 1953)	Post- Congress (Mar. 1954)
bread	—	12	15
meat	25	16	17
animal fats	—	23	24
vegetable fats	—	22	22
fish	3	10	14
canned fish	—	30	36
processed fruits and vegetables	30	27	27
sugar	34	7	7
wool textiles	10	11	11
cotton textiles	6	12	12
silk textiles	0	20	20
leather shoes	6	21	22
soap	7	15	16
furniture	25	26	26
radio receivers	25	24	34
motorcycles	141	100	125
bicycles	28	45	279

<sup>1</sup> Sources: *Theses for the Discussion before the Second Congress of the United Workers Party, as accepted by the IXth Plenum of the Central Committee of the United Workers Party (Warsaw), October 29-30, 1953; Trybuna Ludu (Warsaw), March 20, 1954; Trybuna Ludu, February 6, 1954. Statistics given in percent.*

<sup>2</sup> Figure given as approximate increase.

The chart below traces the development of selected consumer goods production from 1938 to the present and compares the production results with the original and revised 1955 Six Year Plan goals. Despite the assertions that consumer goods production is to be substantially increased, the revised 1955 goals for cotton and silk textiles are below the 1955 planned goal in the original Six Year Plan. Wool, textiles, soap and shoe production goals have been raised substantially, however, and these expanded goals conform with the new extensive livestock program. Sugar production is projected only slightly above the 1953 level and the original 1955 goal (exceeded in 1953). Production figures for meat<sup>1</sup>, bread, milk and fats are incomplete or unavailable. Publication of these figures would probably reflect the present low production levels and indicate how production of these commodities has lagged in recent years.

## II. Quantity, Quality and Variety

In his March 10 speech, Bierut admitted that "as far as a number of mass consumption articles are concerned, the tasks of the Plan were not fully implemented." He also declared that "although the consumer goods industry had shown great progress during the first four years of the Six Year Plan, this progress does not satisfy the growing requirements of the working people." He reinforced this point later in his speech by calling attention to the fact that the Polish population had increased from 23 million at the end of the war to approximately 24 million in 1948 and was at present over 26.5 million. Up to 1949, Poland was a net

<sup>1</sup> Bierut revealed in his March 10 speech that the 1953 plan for meat had been underfulfilled by 27 percent.

### Production of Selected Consumer Goods<sup>1</sup>

Commodity	Unit	1938 <sup>2</sup>	1946	1948	1949	1950	Plan		Plan		Projected		Original	Revised
							1951	1951	1952	1952	1953	1953	Goal	Goal
cotton	million	287.6	206.5	344.0	406.5	431.1	465.6	461.3	488.1	470.5	498.0	498.7	607.7	558.5
textiles	meters													
woolen	million	37.7	22.9	41.9	50.1	56.5	60.5	61.6	64.6	64.1	66.9	70.5	74.9	77.5
textiles	meters													
silk	million	23.0	6.6	31.5	47.7	57.4	63.7	66.0	66.4	68.0	66.8	68.0	103.9	81.6
textiles	meters													
leather	million	2.8	2.9	4.9	7.3	12.8	18.3	18.0	20.4	19.6	20.4	20.8	22.2	<sup>3</sup> 25.4
shoes	pairs													
sugar	thousand	506.0	387.0	624.0	745.0	955.0	1,082.3	855.0	1,106.4	824.6	1,120.0	1,105.0	1,100.0	1,182.4
	tons													
cigarettes	billions	9.4	5.4	15.0	21.3	25.7	31.1	33.0	34.6	30.4	—	32.5	30.0	—
soap	thousand	<sup>4</sup> 55.4	—	20.3	53.0	71.0	—	73.8	—	76.0	—	81.3	88.1	<sup>3</sup> 94.3
radio	tons													
receivers	thousand	178.0	—	33.7	—	—	—	156.9	267.2	215.0	—	268.7	300.0	<sup>3</sup> 360.0

<sup>1</sup> Sources: *Theses for the Discussion Before the Second Congress of the United Workers Party, as accepted by the IXth Plenum of the Central Committee of the United Workers Party (Warsaw), October 29-30, 1953; Trybuna Ludu (Warsaw), March 20, 1954; Analiza Wykonania Planu Trzyletniego by R. Secomski (Warsaw), 1950; Dziennik Ustaw (Warsaw) No. 20, 1951, No. 18 and 20, 1952; Wiadomości Statystyczne (Warsaw); Statistische Praxis No. 4 (Berlin), April 1954; Radio Warsaw, February 5, 1954; Annual Communiqués of the State Planning Commission.*

<sup>2</sup> These production figures are for the pre-war area of Poland.

<sup>3</sup> The original thesis of the Party as promulgated in October 1953 called for 25.2 million pairs of shoes, 333.2 thousand radio receivers, and 93.5 thousand tons of soap. These goals were revised upward slightly under the March 1954 Party resolution.

<sup>4</sup> 1937 figure.



Title: Surprising scene in a Budapest Restaurant.

Caption: "Please bring me a large steak with onions."

"How come? Such a small baby and eats steak for dinner?"

"Well, what else can I do if the food industry doesn't produce baby food?"

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), August 13, 1953

importer of consumer goods such as textiles while today she is a net exporter. For example, in 1952 Poland exported \$2.58 million of cotton manufactures to the free world, while it imported only \$42 thousand.<sup>1</sup> During the first nine months of 1953, she exported \$1.33 million of cotton textiles to selected free world countries while she imported none.<sup>2</sup> *Zycie Gospodarcze* (Warsaw), April 4, 1954, reported that one-tenth of Polish woolen textile production and one-eighth of her cotton textile production are exported.

One of the principal regime problems is to improve the quality and variety of consumer goods as well as expand their production. In the March 10 speech, Bierut pointed out that "in expanding the consumer goods industry, particular stress must be laid both on the quantitative increase and on the improvement of quality, as well as on widening the range of consumer goods." He emphasized that "it was necessary to lay stress on the battle for quality production, on stepping up durability of goods, on improvement of the quality of packing, on the adaptation to the requirements and wishes of the consumer [!], as well as on the production increase of higher quality commodities."

On March 13, Minc reiterated Bierut's program (as reported over Radio Warsaw):

"... it is not the quantity of consumer goods that is most important—for the quality has been unsatisfactory, the range of goods too narrow, the finishing of articles unattractive, the packing poor, and the goods not adapted to consumers' tastes. The complaints about this state of affairs are justified. Bad habits have been deeply rooted in many branches of our industry and trade. In the times of competition, in the old times, the capitalists used to say when they had difficulties in selling: 'our customer is our master.' Now, our industry and trade

think they can sell everything and consider that they need not care about quality or the range of goods, and they need not bother about the customer, for he is going to buy everything anyway.

"... the country is expecting a considerable improvement in the supply of industrial consumer goods. The people have a right to demand it. They have a right to expect their needs to be considered and satisfied. The people have the right to claim better clothes and better footwear, more palatable and more varied foods, more and better furniture and household goods. These justified claims must be met."

### III. Internal Trade

Bierut also revealed that the total value of retail goods turnover had increased only 28 percent since 1949. He gave absolute value figures for the turnover of retail sales for both 1949 and 1953, as shown in the chart below.

#### Growth of Retail Trade Turnover<sup>1</sup>

	Total Trade Turnover			Socialized Sector	
	Index	Value <sup>2</sup>	Percent Socialized	Index	Value <sup>2</sup>
1949	100.0	83.0	56.0	100.0	46.48
1953	128.0	106.5	96.1	220.2	102.35
1955 Plan	—	—	—	275.3	127.94

Bierut also called for a 25 percent increase in the value of retail goods turnover in the "Socialized" sector for 1955, as compared to a reported six per cent increase for 1953 over 1952 (Plan Report, *Trybuna Ludu*, February 6, 1954). This would mean that the value of the retail goods turnover of "Socialized" trade is now scheduled to increase by 1955 slightly more than 175 percent over 1949, as compared to a projected increase of 90 percent under the original Six Year Plan. However, the difference is that, at the time of the formulation of the Six Year Plan, it was not anticipated that private trade would drop to such an insignificant level. Even if the value of total retail goods turnover were to increase 25 per cent during the next two years, total trade would only be 60 percent above the 1949 level, a not particularly good year.

The following factors are apparent:

(a) Growth of retail goods turnover since 1949 has not kept pace with the expanded requirements and purchasing power of the people.

(b) The growth of retail goods turnover since 1949 has not kept pace either with the shifts or growth of population. The Polish population has increased more than 10 percent in the past six years. Further, there has been a large popu-

<sup>1</sup> Source: Bierut March 10 speech. From these figures, the increase in "Socialized" trade during this period is computed. It should be noted, however, that the index computed from the Bierut speech for the increase in "Socialized" trade since 1949 is below that computed from the annual communiques of the State Planning Commission. If the latter were used, the 1953 index would be 240.2 rather than 220.2, another indication of the ambiguity of Communist statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Value given in billions of zloty at November 1953, in pre-price reduction prices.

<sup>1</sup> US Dept. of Commerce, *East-West Trade Statistics*.

<sup>2</sup> *Commodity Trade Statistics*, United Nations, March 1954.



lation shift from rural to urban areas and from the Eastern to the Western sections of the country since the war's end. Rural dwellers, who formerly made their own clothing at home and supplied many of their basic food needs from their own land, are now urban factory workers. No longer producers, these workers are an additional consumer drain on the limited supply of consumer goods and retail facilities.

The regime is not entirely oblivious to the retail trade problems that confront it. In his March 13 speech, Vice Premier Minc called for an expanded network of service shops. He said that the Ministry of Small Scale Industry and Crafts, which at present has about 100 thousand service shops, must expand to 140 thousand shops. The 1953 communique of the State Planning Commission stated (Radio Warsaw, February 5, 1954) that the number of "Socialized" retail shops increased in 1953 by over six thousand and 11.6 thousand retail trade points were opened. It specified that "particular attention was paid to the needs of the rural areas."

The retail trade expansion program projected for the next two years (1954 and 1955) seems extremely modest compared to the reported increases in retail establishments for 1953. The October 1953 Ninth Plenum resolution called for only four thousand new retail shops during this period, while the March 1954 Second Congress resolution upped the figure only to five thousand.

#### IV. Investments

One sure way of gauging the extent of regime intentions to raise the level of consumer goods production is to examine their investment program. The Ninth Plenum Theses (issued in October 1953) called for a 38 percent increase in consumer goods investments in 1955 as compared to 1953. This was modified somewhat in the Second Congress resolution (issued in March 1954), which called for a 35 to 40 percent increase by 1955.

According to the February 1954 *Inwestycje i Budownictwo* (Warsaw), the index of increase for consumer goods investment was broken down as follows:<sup>1</sup> chemical industry, branches producing consumer items only (108.5); light industry (124.2); food processing industry (117.9); meat and milk industry (146.4); wood and paper industry, those branches producing only consumer goods (104.3); small industry and handicrafts (145.5). The total increase con-

templated in consumer goods investments for 1954 over 1953 was given as 14.4 percent. A subsequent issue of *Inwestycje i Budownictwo* (April 1954) gave the percentage of increase for investment in light industry over 1953 as 28.5 percent. This discrepancy is probably due to the fact that overall 1954 investment expenditures originally called for a two percent increase over 1953 (*Inwestycje i Budownictwo*, February 1954), while a later report indicated that 1954 investment would be one and a half percent below the 1953 level (*Trybuna Ludu*, April 24), which would mean that investments were reduced from the original 28.44 billion *zloty* to approximately 27.43 billion.<sup>1</sup> Although consumer goods investment is being substantially expanded, it will fall considerably short of the proposed 35 to 40 percent increase in consumer goods investment projected for 1955.

Despite regime assertions that the real income of the Polish consumer has increased substantially over the prewar and postwar periods, actual living conditions have not improved correspondingly. Refugee reports and the Communist press and radio themselves indicate that the standard of living is still very low. Communist statistics on the standard of living are rigged by including the State insurance benefits, unemployment insurance, etc., as part of the real income. Moreover, there is a considerable shortage of such articles as coffee, tea, fats, etc., all of which are taken out of the workers' reach by high prices (rationing by price). The increase in consumer goods production does not necessarily mean that the supply of such items will be increased commensurately on the home market. Further, the New Course consumer goods program in Poland is only slightly above the original Six Year Plan goals and in several cases below. Consumer goods investment is being increased but only over an excessively low 1953 level, as set forth under the accelerated Plan. Moreover, the 1953 production level is still more heavily weighted in favor of producer goods than was true in the original Six Year Plan.

<sup>1</sup> These figures were computed from the 1954 Budget speech (Radio Warsaw, April 23), which said that 1954 budgetary expenditures would be 6.9 percent more than actual expenditures during 1953. Since 1954 expenditure was given as 103.4 billion *zloty*, 1953 expenditure was equal to 96.7 billion. The report also stated that investment outlay during 1954 equalled 27.5 percent of the total, as compared to 28.8 percent during 1953. Since the original amount for 1954 was 28.44 billion, 1953 investment expenditure was equal to approximately 27.85 billion *zloty*.

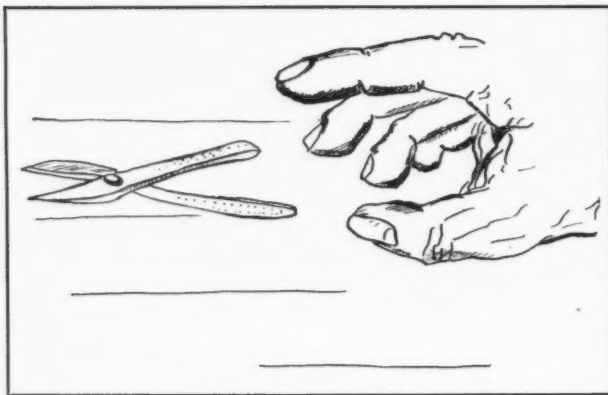
<sup>1</sup> 1953 equals 100. Proposed 1954 index given in parenthesis.

### *No Cause for Alarm*

During a recent visit to Moscow, Hungarian leader Matyas Rakosi looked up Malenkov, and asked him in confidence: "Do you have any reactionary elements at all in your country, Comrade?" "Yes, unfortunately we do have some," came the reply. "About how many?" asked Rakosi. "Well, I would say roughly eight or nine million." "Thank goodness," Rakosi sighed, "Hungary has no more than that either."

# The Lost Pliers

*This is the dramatic escape story of a forty-year-old man who fled from Hungary into Austria early this year after three years in the Recsk Concentration Camp.*



**E**VEN while in the Recsk camp, we had decided to inform the West of the terrible conditions and the inhuman cruelty of the Communists there. Then came the amnesty. In August, 1953, a secret police detail separated 270 of the inmates and transferred them to Kistarcsa where—as we later learned—they were convicted to long prison sentences. The rest of us were forced to sign statements promising never to divulge any information concerning the Recsk Camp. The punishment for revealing such information was stated to be 15 years in prison. Then, in the middle of September, we were released.

All their efforts to intimidate us were not enough to quench my own longing for freedom, and in the middle of the following February, I confided to one of my friends that I planned to escape during the night of March 4 because there was no moon that night. My friend had just been called up for military service and could not reconcile himself to serving in a Communist army, so he decided to come with me. We began preparations immediately.

On March 3, a Wednesday evening, we took the train to Szombathely. We carried two suitcases and a briefcase. Everything went well until we reached Celldomol where the police checked our papers. My friend's false papers were accepted without comment, but there was trouble with mine because I bought my ticket via Szombathely to Nagykanizsa. The latter was in the frontier zone and I did not have the necessary special permission to enter the border zone. The police took me from the train and to the local police station. I took only my briefcase with me and left the other baggage on the train.

On the way to the police station, I remembered to my horror that I had two wire cutting pliers in my pocket. Realizing how embarrassing this would prove, I tried to get rid of them along the way but could not do so because if I had dropped them on the hard pavement, my police

escort would have noticed. I arrived at the police station with the pliers in my pocket, and desperate. However, there I managed to drop the pliers on the wooden floor just before entering the officers' interrogation room. After an hour of questioning, I was told to return home and obtain a zone entry permit from the local police there. I found the pliers where I had left them, and since the guard was busy reading a magazine, I quickly picked them up and hurriedly left the building.

I walked to the railway station to look for my friend but couldn't find him anywhere. In the meantime, the guard must have realized that there was something strange about the presence and disappearance of the pliers. Soon I heard a policeman warn a sentry at the station to pick up the man who had just left the police station. This was warning enough and I gave up the search for my friend and left the railway station in the greatest haste.

I started walking toward the West. At the end of the town I came to a river spanned by two bridges. But I didn't dare take the bridges because I knew that an hour had elapsed since I left the station and that was time enough for the police to throw a cordon around the town. I faced the angry river which the March wind had whipped into huge waves. From a distance I heard a low murmuring and walked in the direction of the sound. There I found a dam and a narrow iron rail about one yard above the dirty milling water leading from one bank to the other. I crawled along the rail and so managed to cross the river.

On the other side I walked about two kilometers to the crossroad to Bucsú when suddenly the lights of several cars flashed behind me. Anxiously, I watched what direction they took and noticed that six of them turned towards Narda, while some eight cars came in my direction. I dived into the field, which had been turned by the early spring thaw into a sea of mire. I lay there in the mud and

watched. The last of the cars stopped at a bridge spanning the river some one hundred or so yards from me. The lights of the car shone on the water, and from the light I tried to estimate the depth of the water and my chances of crossing it.

Several people got out of the car and then it sped away. I heard the men say that I could not have gotten far on foot. One of them said that I couldn't walk ten yards in that mud. It was clear that they were after me. Then followed the most terrible hours of my life. It was obvious that all the roads would be blocked, so my only chance seemed to be to continue my way across the fields, stumbling, wading in the water. I tried to follow the direction toward Bucsu. In the dark, I came to a river that I managed to swim. On the other side, I realized the near hopelessness of my situation. I was dripping wet and shivering with cold in the March night, and I could not enter any house to dry myself. My only chance of survival was to run. So I ran for my life, in the biting wind, to escape from pneumonia and my pursuers. I lost my shoes in the mud several times, and retrieved them, but finally they sank in the water and I continued on my way barefoot. At first I was conscious of stones and other sharp objects cutting into my flesh, but later exhaustion and anxiety made me insensitive to physical pain.

In the distance there were flashes of lights which spurred me to even greater haste. I came to several other brooks swelled by the flood, so that I was forced to swim five rivers of various sizes that night. After swimming a fairly wide channel, I thought I had finally crossed the frontier and I went on wading in the knee-deep mud with a little more composure. Suddenly, I came to more solid ground.

I reached the end of the field and proceeded with the greatest caution, crawling on my hands and knees. My hand touched a thin wire, and I realized that I was still in Hungary. Carefully, I moved on. There was no sign of frontier guards. My groping hands again touched a wire, this time attached to a mine. Slowly, I cut the first wire and, moving with the greatest possible care, I dug into the earth and finally managed to cut another wire and render the mine harmless.

And then I was on free soil. Suddenly, I was overwhelmed by an almost numbing sense of relief and a terrible tiredness. I sank down to the ground utterly exhausted, but after a few minutes I summoned my last strength and dragged myself about fifty yards further, where I stretched out in the mud.

After a short rest, I started to walk towards the next village and it was nearly dawn by the time I reached Rohonc. I saw light in one of the houses and knocked at the door. A friendly woman opened the door and I greeted her in German. One look told her that I was a refugee, since I was covered to the eyes with mud. She addressed me in Hungarian and welcomed me. She gave me water to bathe and was about to bring me dry clothes when she noticed my bleeding feet. She bandaged them and told me to sleep.

I do not know how long I slept but when I awoke my clothes were dry and the friendly farm couple offered me a pair of shoes. I could not get them on my swollen feet, so the farmer gave me his brand new rubber boots. The next morning they gave me 50 shillings to help me get to Vienna, where I arrived without much further trouble.

## The Theory of Identical Stomachs

"... the Communists made mistakes in factories, because they were ignorant of political principles and Party ideology. Frequently they did not oppose Social Democratic demands based on the theory that everybody's stomach is the same. They did not counter this theory, which damages Communist building, by explaining that everyone should be rewarded on the Communist principle of reward according to work done for the benefit of society. The theory of identical stomachs assists shirkers and leads to the lowering of worker productivity..."

*Rude Pravo* editorial read over Radio Prague, March 12, 1954

# Creating The Communist Elite

*"The Soviet school cannot be satisfied to rear merely educated persons. Basing itself on the facts and deductions of progressive science, it should instill the ideology of Communism in the minds of the young generation, shape a Marxist-Leninist world outlook and inculcate the spirit of Soviet patriotism and Bolshevik ideas in them."*

**Culture and Life** (Moscow), August 1947

WE HAVE seen them in the West for some time now, the new creations of the Communist world, not the "new Socialist man" they propagandize, but a different man nonetheless, a man of the Communist Gletkin generation. The older Communists, the men of the Rubashov generation, Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, with all their ties to the West, could still be partly understood by the West, but the Gletkin generation of smooth-faced Malenkovs, Khrushchevs, and Gromykos are men of a different stamp, and far harder for the West to know. What are they really like? How do they come about? Part of these questions can be answered by the story of the Andrei Jdanov School for Social Sciences in Bucharest.

## I. The School and Its Requirements

The Jdanov School is a training ground for men and women hand-picked by the Romanian Communist Party to form the political-professional elite of the nation, to hold key positions in public life as editors of Party newspapers, as political advisors in the administrative agencies of the government, and as professors of Marxism-Leninism in the high schools and universities. About 15 per cent of the students are Army and Security Police officers receiving high-level ideological training. The school is not run by the Ministry of Education but it is a function of the Agitation-Propaganda section of the Central Committee of the Romanian Worker's (Communist) Party. The Central Committee member in charge of Agitation and Propaganda is also the director of the Jdanov School.

This is the most advanced Party indoctrination school in Romania; two others are on a lower level: the Stefan Gheorghiu School, which prepares bureaucratic cadres and organizers—local or regional Secretaries, Agit-Prop representatives—for the Party; and the Foreign Affairs School, which prepares future Communist diplomats and representatives of the government abroad as well as specialists in international intelligence work.

The decision to create the Jdanov school dates back to 1948, when the Central Committee of the Romanian WP turned the Central School of Lecturers in Bucharest into the "Andrei A. Jdanov Advanced School of Social Sciences." The length of the course, previously six months, was extended to two years, and an additional preparatory year added for those lacking a general education. To accommodate the school, the Party took over the building of Notre Dame de Sion, once Bucharest's most fashionable girls' finishing school. In January 1950, the school opened with an enrollment of 150 students, all Party members with positions in Party organizations. Of the 150, 120 were "allowed" to continue their studies in the second year. In 1951, the enrollment was increased to 250.

### Selection

Students are not admitted to the school by their own application. The Central Committee selects and assigns them to the school through the local Party organizations, without consulting the students themselves. Six months before the beginning of the school year, the Central Committee requests lists of possible candidates for the Jdanov School from the Party Regional Secretariats. The Regional Secretariats transmit the request to the Rayon (District) Secretariats, which in turn send it on to the Communal (Town) Secretariats. The Communal Secretariats, in collaboration with the Secretariats of the Basic Party Organizations, compile lists of prospects. These lists, after being checked by the "Verification Sections" of the Rayon Organizations, are sent together with the personnel files of the candidate to the "Verification and Cadres Section" of the Regional Organizations. This department, after verifying and completing the inquiries made by the Rayon Or-

\* The "Verification" and "Cadres" sections are the intelligence and personnel security units within the Communist Party organizations. On the lower level there are only so-called "Verification" sections, while starting at the level of the Regional Organization the section is called "Verification and Cadres."



ganizations, calls in each candidate for an interview (the candidate is not told why he is being summoned) at headquarters where he is questioned thoroughly by a three-man commission. If the commission is satisfied with his replies, he is asked if he wishes to attend a Party school, but the name of the school and the length of the course are not disclosed. Naturally, all candidates profess their eagerness. The candidate's file is then forwarded to the "Cadres section" of the Central Committee in Bucharest.

Upon receipt of the file, the Central Committee appoints its own commission which proceeds to the headquarters of the Regional Organization and re-interrogates the candidate. If this commission reports favorably, the Central Committee appoints a third commission to double-check the findings of the first two. If this last commission approves, the candidate is summoned by the Central Committee to Bucharest and informed that he has been chosen to attend the Jdanov School. Certain recruits—notably those from the Security Police cadres—are not subjected to all the steps of this investigation procedure.

From the time of his admission, the student at the Jdanov School is supported by Party funds covering all his expenses, unless he was employed at the time of his entrance. In that case, he is retained at full salary on the payroll of the factory or office where he was working, and 20-25 percent of his paycheck is deducted by the school for room and board. The school pays for the students' travelling expenses to their homes during summer vacations and provides textbooks and working supplies at no charge.

#### Lectures and Lecturers

There are two categories of instructors at the school: (a) outside speakers who lecture on specific subjects, and (b) a permanent faculty who teach the courses. The first group is made up of leading figures of the Romanian Worker's Party and the State administration, such as (in 1951-52) Vasile Luca, Ana Pauker and Sencovici; and prominent foreign Communists such as Yudin, former editor of the Cominform newspaper *For a Lasting Peace*, and now Soviet Ambassador to China, Professor Ostrowsky of Leningrad University, etc. The names of these speakers and the dates of their lectures are never announced in advance. The speakers arrive accompanied by two "assistants"—members of the Security Police—and the lectures are given to the entire student body, which is assembled on not more than 20 minutes' notice regardless of class schedules.

The lecture is considered valuable more for its psychological than its educational effect. It is a "pep talk" whose purpose is to arouse ideological fanaticism and fervor to a high pitch in the future leaders of the Communist state. The task of the permanent faculty is to isolate and amplify the factual content of the lectures.

In 1951-52 the permanent staff was composed of:

The Director: Leonte Rautu. In practice he was director in name only, his main concern being the Agitation and Propaganda sector of the Central Committee.

Studies Director (Dean): Grigore Kotowsky. Kotowsky, acting director of the school is a man about whom little

is known. He speaks both Romanian and Russian fluently, and it is assumed that he is Bessarabian by birth. He is believed to have taken an active part in the Spanish Civil War and to have been evacuated from there to the USSR. In 1944 he came to Romania as an officer in the Red Army with the rank of captain.

Two professors: Stirbu, teaching philosophy and dialectical materialism; Rachmut, teaching political economy.

Two instructors: Roman, teaching history; Borgeanu, teaching history and philosophy.

Four Russian-language professors (all women).

Between ten and fifteen assistants, sometimes called seminar leaders. These assist the professors and are in charge of the seminar (study) groups. Party reliability rather than education is the chief qualification of this group, whose main task is to keep the students under political surveillance and report on their attitudes. Within the Jdanov School—whose student government is organized along lines parallel to that of the Communist Party—this group forms the "verification and cadres" section.

Responsible to these assistants are the student leaders, recruited from among the students and constituting the "basic Party organization" of the school. There is one leader for each study group. (The student body meets collectively only for the speeches of the guest lecturers. For all other activities they are broken down into groups of 15-20 students.)

#### Communist Curriculum

The curriculum of the school is listed below. Where relevant, courses are titled by the name of the textbook on which the course is based.

##### First Year:

- History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Political Economy (based on a revised and shortened version of Marx's *Capital*)
- Dialectics and historical materialism
- Structure of the Socialist State (People's Councils, National Assembly and the other administrative bodies)
- Structure of the Communist Party (principles and organizational bodies)
- History of Romania (based on a textbook edited by Mihail Roller)
- World History (standard text issued by the Communist Ministry of Education)
- Russian language
- Contemporary International Politics (capitalist imperialism, Soviet peace campaign, etc.)

##### Second Year:

- Continuation of first year courses, plus
- Socialist economy (special studies connected with Soviet economics. Sources: Lenin, Stalin, Varga)
- History of Philosophy

The students live on a rigid schedule, every hour being strictly accounted for. The daily program is as follows:

- 6:00- 6:40 Gymnastics
  - 7:00- 7:30 Breakfast
  - 7:30- 8:30 Newspaper reading. Every student is required to subscribe to *Scinteia*, *Contemporarul*, and the Cominform weekly *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy*
  - 8:30- 1:30 Classes
  - 1:30- 2:00 Lunch
  - 2:00- 4:30 Free time. In practice, these hours are reserved for practical work which first-year students perform at the plant "23 August" and second-year students at the plant "Republica." The work consists of supervising agitation and propaganda activities carried out by the plant committees, particularly the organization of labor competitions to raise the rate of production
  - 4:30- 8:30 Classes and Seminars
  - 8:30- 9:00 Supper
  - 9:00-10:00 Cultural hour (courses in literature and the arts)
  - 10-Midnight Study period. This time is used not only for preparation of class assignments, but also for political meetings. Once a week the "basic Party organization" of the school holds "criticism" meetings which deal mainly with disciplinary problems. Every two or three months each study group meets to "criticize" its own academic progress in the presence of the assistant and a professor appointed by the director of the school
  - Midnight: Lights out. Students sleep in dormitories accommodating six to ten people
  - Free Time: Theoretically students are at liberty from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning at 6 a.m. In practice, students are sent on "voluntary" trips to political exhibitions on Sunday mornings, and on Sunday afternoons they attend movies "recommended" by the Director of the Jdanov School.
- Vacations are appropriated by the school in similar fashion. The Winter Holiday is eight days long, and students are obliged to work for five of these days as agitators at the headquarters of their home, Regional or Rayon headquarters. The Spring holiday requirements are identical. During the summer vacation — July 15-September 15 — students must perform agitation-propaganda work at places designated by the school: the coal-mining area of the Jiu Valley and certain sections of the Black Sea-Danube Canal project were the chief locations to which student agitators were assigned in the summer.

## II. The Technique of Indoctrination

*"A proselytizing movement deliberately fosters in its adherents a frustrated state of mind, and it automatically advances its own interest when it seconds the propensities of the frustrated."*

Eric Hoffer in *The True Believer*

The Jdanov School method begins with the selection of the students. Certain very specific qualifications are looked for by the Party scouts for the school. Some of these appear paradoxical, but the requirements have their own logic in the Romanian Communist Party's viewpoint and goals.

The social qualification is simple and fundamental: the student must be of proletarian origin. Politically, the student should not have had any firm ties before 1948—not even to the Communist Party. He and his family should not have been members of the Communist Party during the Second World War; undoubtedly this is because during the war the CP carried out a broad "front" and put little emphasis on the pure Party line.

If the candidate is now a member of the Communist Party, as virtually all candidates are, the reasons for his joining, his activity within the Party, the measure of his enthusiasm, and his past and present attitude toward the Soviet Union are investigated. The candidate must be able to account for his whereabouts and occupation since the age of ten. For each five-year period of his life, he must give three references, all Party members. For the period of his own Party membership, the number of references must be larger, varying in individual cases without any fixed maximum.

Educationally, it is most desirable that the candidate have had no advanced or even intermediate education under former regimes. A man who has received a liberal education may have developed mental habits inimical to any closed system of reasoning. He probably has been exposed to arguments and philosophic concepts contrary to orthodox Marxism, but even more important, he probably has acquired the habit of criticism, of forming independent judgments on the basis of knowledge, experience and observation.

On the other hand, the unschooled mind, out of ignorance, tends to accept the Communist interpretation of all phenomena from history to wheat-growing. And it can be taught to reason solely by the method of dialectical materialism, and will apply this method's blueprint solutions to all intellectual problems. Thus, not only the factual knowledge of such a man but the very machinery of his thinking can be brought under the control of the Communists.

### Prejudice and Privilege

In recruiting for the Communist Party elite, the Party seeks not only a certain kind of intellectual vulnerability but also a certain kind of psychological make-up. It is not enough that the candidate should come from a semi-literate, non-political working-class family. The candidate's response to this environment is the significant factor. The preferred elements from this category are those who have

reacted not with resignation but with rebellion and resentment against the society which "victimized" them. Men who suffered or saw their families suffer from extreme privation and hunger, those who were humiliated because of their social or racial rights, those whose desire for learning was frustrated by poverty, those with a sense of being handicapped in their profession because of social, racial or educational limitations, are considered highly susceptible to the appeal of the Party. The regime represents itself as having eliminated the causes of their suffering, and fans their grudges against previous social systems by justifying and sympathizing with this attitude. In return for fidelity, obedience, and discipline, the Party presents itself as ready to satisfy their longing for superiority and revenge. It must be emphasized that it is not individual superiority which is offered, but superiority through identification with the Party, the superior "instrument of history." The individual's pride and confidence must be linked to the fortunes of the group rather than to his personal prospects and abilities. Thus, the individual is both emotionally and in fact dependent upon the Party. Some of these individuals come to regret their association with the Party, but they feel "trapped"; they feel they have no way out.

Aside from this skillful exploitation of the psychological element, the Communists also offer a less subtle bait. From the start it is made clear to the students that they will in the future be members of the upper echelons in either the State administration or the Party apparatus. No one is more aware than the Communists of how strongly any privileged segment of society defends its privileges, particularly in a situation in which the average man lives in misery and the problems of food and fuel are a matter of daily concern. For example, while there was great meat scarcity in Romania in 1951, the Jdanov School students had meat twice a day.

### Destruction of Individuality

Having thus defined and then found the suitable individual, the first active step in the indoctrination process of the school is the destruction of his individuality. The immediate object is to surround the student with conditions in which his sole preoccupation—as far as is physically possible—will be the Party and matters connected with the Party.

To perfect this the Communists have developed a number of scientific techniques. A basic measure is to keep the students busy for sixteen to eighteen hours a day. The heavy schedule, in which every hour is strictly allocated, is not designed only to give more knowledge to the students but to deny them time for reflection and for development of outside interests.

Most students at the Jdanov School—in particular, those in the second year—complain continually of overwork and exhaustion. In November 1950 this situation became so serious that Kotowsky, acting director of the school, was obliged to call a general meeting of the students at which he criticized the "obsession with fatigue" exhibited by the students. Kotowsky declared that the students had no cause for complaint, since the Party has given them "ideal

conditions" for study. He reminded them of what the Party leaders had suffered in the "reactionary prisons" and how they had turned the prisons into "Party universities."

Although this fatigue may be partly nervous, it probably has some physiological basis. In the autumn of 1950, all students entering the school were examined for tuberculosis and only those who showed no sign of infection were admitted. By the following May, when tests were made again, 15 percent of the students showed signs of tuberculosis despite the high quality of the school diet.

### Cliques and Criticisms

Another technique in the neutralization of personality is the prevention of close friendships between students. As soon as two or more students become friendly, they are accused of forming "exclusive cliques" are put into separate study groups. Confidences between friends not only stimulate a private life and the expression of individuality, but they lead to an exchange of political views and the encouragement of doubts and dissatisfactions. The Party does not tolerate the possibility of a conflict of loyalties. The allegiance of the Party man must be to the collective whole and not to his fellow individual Communist.

Related to this discouragement of personal ties is the deliberate fostering of suspicion and rivalry among the students. A "model" student is adept at finding deviations from the Party line in the attitudes or opinions of his fellow students. Those who cannot perceive such deviations are accused by the seminar assistants of a lack of "combative spirit," and are sooner or later forced into the practice of denunciation. When a student is attacked by one of his fellows it then becomes essential for him to discover an error on the part of a third student. There is a constant competition to find pretexts for criticism. For example, in a private conversation, a student will be asked if he has read a certain article in *Scinteia* and what he thinks about it. If the student has not read the article, he is guilty of the error of "sloppy reading" of the Party newspaper. If he does comment on the article, he may say something which can be construed as "improper" interpretation of the Party line. This mistake is seized upon, embellished and discussed at the next seminar meeting. Students must be perpetually on guard to avoid giving their fellow students "material for criticism."

This form of oppression is complemented by the activity of student informers in the school: To recruit these, four or six students from each study group are called in separately and in secrecy by the group assistant. Each is told that he is being taken into the Party's confidence, that "enemies of the Party" have infiltrated the school, and that he must show a special vigilance and at regular intervals report any hostile sentiments which he notices among the students in his group. If the student unvaryingly reports that he has not found any anti-Party sentiment, he is told that he lacks vigilance and might himself be suspected by the Party. In order to save his own position, the informer is driven to exaggeration, misinterpretation and even fabrication. This naturally feeds the mutual distrust among the students and further accelerates disintegration of individuality.



The absolute infallibility of the Communist Party and the entire discipline which follows from this assumption is the core of the educational system at the Jdanov School. The irrefutable argument in any political or scientific discussion is to cite a passage from a Party resolution or a Stalin speech. Attempts to understand and to analyze the Party line are heretical. This leads to total dependence and blind faith and when practiced over a long period of time is effective in destroying any lingering tendencies toward independent thought.

### Indoctrination Themes

The vacuum thus created by the destruction of individuality is replaced on the emotional level by fanatic passion (sparked by the talks given by the Party leaders) and on the intellectual level by the constant repetition of certain elementary themes (taught in class by the professors). Simultaneously, all access to written or spoken material other than that of the Party is blocked. Everything the student reads is Party-issued or at least Party-censored. Students find the Party line everywhere and in everything—in news, in art, in literature, in movies.

The following are themes from the main political line taught to students at the Jdanov School. Conflicts between Marxist theory and the pragmatic Soviet-oriented Party line are always resolved in favor of the latter.

1. *The Soviet Union is superior* to any other country in the world in every field. Its policy is inspired by sentiments of generosity toward the peoples enslaved by capitalism. It is only because of Soviet Russia's fraternal help that Romania is independent today. A good Romanian patriot is he who fights for the Soviet Union, the only country which can make the existence of Romania's independence secure.

2. *Marxist theory.* While dialectical materialism is presented accurately enough, many of the conclusions and

historical data referring to the evolution of Marxian philosophy are left out or distorted.

3. *Anti-Western propaganda.* The content of this is well known. The "peace campaign" is carried out under the slogan of rearmament: the students are taught categorically that an armed attack on the Communist countries is inevitable.

4. *Anti-Social-Democratic* ("democratic or reformist socialism") *propaganda.* This line is heavily stressed. The fact that the social democrats were always in opposition under previous regimes, and even underwent political persecution, is an embarrassment to Communist ideology as taught at the Jdanov School. There is the ever-present danger that students, confronted with the discrepancy between Communist theory and Soviet colonial practice, will turn their hopes toward social democratism. The campaign of abuses against the social democrats is far more vigorous than that against the previous regimes which have no appeal for these students.

5. *Anti-Tito propaganda.* If the Communists fear the appeal of social democratism, their fear of nationalism and patriotism is even greater. This is probably their most vulnerable point, for it is certain that many Romanians—even these students—resent Russian exploitation of their country, particularly in the economic sphere.

Is the indoctrination process of the Jdanov School successful? From the Communist point of view, it is. Approximately 40 percent of the students are "broken in" after the first six months; by the end of the full two (or three) years, almost all the students are considered indoctrinated. And yet men will not be machine-educated into interchangeable parts. In spite of the combined Marxist-Pavlovism of this elitist education, in spite of the material advantages offered, members of their elite still choose freedom and escape to the West, both to tell their stories (as this one was told) and to teach the West more of what makes the Communist elite.

## Footprints

In July 1953, according to a Polish refugee, the border police in Leba discovered two sets of mysterious footprints on the beach. The footprints led from the sea, went across the beach, and disappeared into the woods.

These footprints caused great excitement and speculation, recalling to the police a landing by "American agents" in Leba a few years before. A full patrol was sent out, armed with rifles and bayonets. They combed every inch of the forest, put dogs on the scent, searched houses from cellar to attic, and interrogated suspects by the dozen.

They found nothing, and the mystery remained unsolved.

The footprints, the refugee explained with a smile, were made by a young Pole who, one evening when there was no guard on the beach, conceived the mischievous notion of removing his shoes and walking backward down to the water's edge, while a friend kept watch. He walked back in the usual way, leaving two sets of fresh footprints side by side. Then he and his friend went home and waited for the border police to put on their show.



# The Critics Cornered

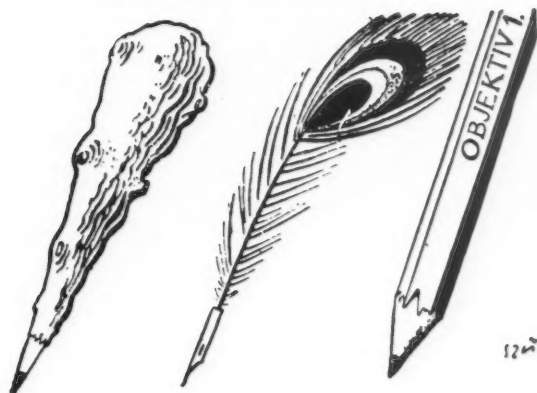
*Because totalitarian art finds its roots outside of art, totalitarian criticism finds its roots in extra-aesthetic considerations. Cornered by their political, economic criticism, Communist book reviewers are caught between the Scylla of saying too little and the Charybdis of saying too much.*

BECAUSE criticism flourishes only in a free society, in an atmosphere devoid of fear and sympathetic to diversity, literary criticism in Communist Europe exists only insofar as it serves the interests of the State. The Communist literary critic is primarily a guardian of the State order; his chief task is to promote Communist philosophy and to ensure that art reflects the regime's concept of reality which, in literary jargon, is called "Socialist realism." Since the literary critic's foremost duty is to support Communist views, literary criticism is essentially political. Like any other regime functionary, the literary critic depends on Party approval, and playing it safe has become his primary concern. In all cases, his opinion must be the Party's opinion: if he discerns it, he is fortunate; if he is uncertain, he treads on dangerous ground. Not only must he expose signs of "bourgeois ideology" in literature and "inadequate" Marxism, but he must also cater to the whims of Party cultural experts and pitch his voice neither higher nor lower than the accepted chorus of the day. The margin for error is great: caught between Scylla and Charybdis—between saying too little and saying too much—the critic in Communist Europe is a victim of fear and a master of evasion. He hides behind Party slogans, and is timid, superficial, parochial and often lacking in individuality and professional integrity.

## Book Reviewing

Most reviews in the daily papers are brief summaries of the ideological contents of a new work of art. Because of space limitations, the press reviewer has fewer opportunities to make mistakes than his less fortunate colleagues who

## A KRITIKUS...



Title: To The Critic.

Captions: Not this [the bludgeon] . . . or this [the feather] . . . but this [the pencil marked objectivity].  
Irodalmi Ujsag (Budapest), October 24, 1953

write for cultural weeklies or literary magazines. By briefly stating what he considers to be a book's theme, the press reviewer may consider himself "covered." A typical example of such a review appeared in the January 7, 1954 issue of the Bulgarian newspaper *Vecherni Novini* (Sofia). Noting the publication of poet Georgi Bitsin's *Peace Wardens*, the reviewer said: "This collection of poems is dedicated to the peace struggle. The first cycle points out that the Party is the organizer of and inspiration for our victories. In his 'News,' the author expresses with true emotion the people's manly grief over the death of our unforgettable people's leader and teacher, Georgi Dimitrov."

Similarly, *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), January 17, 1954, reviewed a new book called *Istinski Hora* (True Men) by Ghencho Stoev: "The author's subjects are found among living people . . . who, in their resistance and labor success, are persuasive examples. He finds these true men everywhere; on building sites in Dimitrovgrad, in the foundries of Plant 12, in Dobrudja, the dams, and in the Rhodope mines where they work in the 'Ural's tempo and scale'."

The above summaries seem more like praise of Communism than evaluation of literature. In longer reviews, the same type of evasion is apparent, although the reviewer is forced to stick his neck out a bit further—to analyze in greater detail whether a book abides by the Party formula and fulfills the tenets of "Socialist realism." But here, too, the critic often concerns himself not with what a book says, but with what Communist theorists say life ought to be, and his pronouncements cannot be taken seriously if only because they are extraneous to the matter at hand. This was the case in a review of a book about Black Sea fishermen

called *Storm Bird* by Romanian author Peter Dumitriu. Writing in the cultural weekly, *Contemporanul* (Bucharest), February 20, 1953, the critic diligently estimated the author's description of the "old" and "new" life. He approved Dumitriu's delineation of pre-Communist and post-Communist fishermen. The former, he said, were rightly described as resigned, fatalistic victims of nature's savage forces; the latter were "genuinely" portrayed as brave fighters, confronting nature with courage and determination—fighters who "in the era of Socialist construction, were capable of resisting, challenging and preventing nature's destructive action."

"The writer succeeds in establishing the parallelism between the attitude of man towards nature before and after the Socialist modifications of the society to which he belongs, and the effects of his new, Socialist outlook on life as reflected in his relationship to nature. . . . People who are not masters of the means of production . . . cannot become masters of nature, and even less of their own lives. . . . Men, at last masters of their own Socialist lives, have consequently become masters of nature—their own masters. They have become free."

The reviewer uses the same criteria in pointing out faults in *Storm Bird*, taking it upon himself to give author Dumitriu a lesson in Communist philosophy:

"The work lacks a detailed description of the roots of the hero's invincible determination to win over the final storm and death; [the author] does not elaborate on the idea that this passionate and uncontrollable drive for life . . . has deep moral causes founded on their feeling that in this new life which they have conquered, they have no right to die; they *must* live in order to accomplish the great tasks confronting them."

Vehement as he is on matters of ideology, the same critic is timid when discussing *Storm Bird's* structure. If the book has received the Party's unqualified stamp of approval, he cannot call it an artistic flop. Lacking Party absolutes by which to judge, he voices a personal opinion which may or may not receive Party sanction. The difference in tone is amply illustrated in the following quotation:

"One could object to the . . . lack of apparent connection between the opening storm and the conflict which unfolds fifteen years later aboard the ship *October Star*. We could argue that there we have two chains of completely separate events lacking any inner relationship, that the ship incident is an 'interlude', a bridge between the antipodes around which the story of the two storms evolves. This point brings us to an interesting theoretical problem: the laws of literary construction forbid the development of action . . . on separate planes. . . . The handling of a book's action in separate compartments constitutes a compromise harmful to its basic structure, which must be founded on its unity."

### One-Eyed Vision

In his efforts to play it safe, the Communist critic usually devotes a maximum of space to recounting a book's plot. He discusses or merely describes the author's portrayal of

the class struggle, exploiters, Communists, kulaks or "bourgeois remnants," and determines whether these portraits coincide with the Party-approved picture. Since the Communists demand from their authors a rigid, black-and-white portrayal of existence, the critic has definite standards to go by: a kulak cannot be sympathetic, a Communist cannot be petty, the enemy can have no virtues, and the Party must always be virtuous and victorious. If an author has not supported the Party viewpoint successfully, the critic usually suggests that he improve his ideological background. On the other hand, if a critic feels that a book has adequately described the "class struggle," he usually labels it satisfactory. The following article from *Literarni Noviny* (Prague), December 12, 1953, is typical of most favorable reviews:

"Readers . . . are familiar with Norbert Fryd, who reported on his experiences during his post-war stay in Mexico. . . . Fryd has now published his best book to date, *The Vulture's Well*. The reader may find many features of the book familiar if he has read Fryd's anthology of stories, *Mexico Is in America*. But Fryd now recounts these experiences in a superior, more artistic manner, through the conflicts of vividly described figures . . . and a smooth, well-constructed plot. . . . [The book deals] with the struggle of poverty-stricken Indian farmers in the arid village of Amatlan, with their application of their constitutional right to establish an agricultural cooperative . . . and drill a well. . . . The author has the opportunity to describe . . . the hierarchy of exploiters and their lackeys, the kulaks, who are frightened of the cooperative. . . . The author analyzes the unity of the poor, the foundations of the pyramid to whose top we are slowly guided. There, the President of this 'independent country' regards the citizens as mere pawns in a game with American imperialists."

"On the other hand—and this is the novel's main asset—Fryd describes the Mexican people in profile. . . . The handful of Amatlan citizens, who represent the misery of Mexican rural districts, are powerfully supported in the city by 5,000 striking cabdrivers starving because of high prices resulting from American monopolies. The cabdrivers go on strike under the guidance of Communist Trade Unionists. They are joined by factory workers . . . and force the President to capitulate. The victorious urban proletarians assist the farmers in their claims for the cooperative and well in Amatlan. The unity of workers is the most powerful weapon against feudal terror, intrigues and calculating 'sympathy.'"

". . . Because of its clear, Marxist conception, its human approach and artistic form, [*The Vulture's Well*] is better than most books of its kind. It is a success also . . . because it supports the concept of proletarian internationalism—not in a dry, theoretical way—but in an interesting, lively and truly popular manner."

### Between and Between

Because writers as well as critics tend to escape behind Party generalizations, the critic's task is not only to pinpoint bourgeois tendencies but to rebuke writers for superficial portrayals of Communist life. In this respect, the critic is also severely limited: he can deplore cardboard

characterizations, inadequate motivation, political omissions and sloppiness, but he cannot get to the root of the matter by demanding of the writer a many-faceted character or a unique vision. Therefore, the Communist critic usually hovers about the surface and is guilty of the same superficiality he often attributes to the author. An example of a typical negative review is Anna Kirchner's criticism of Danuta Bienkowska's novel, *Roof Over One's Head*, which deals with the life of a group of Polish architects working in a large plant. The review, which appeared in the January 1953 issue of *Tworzosć* (Warsaw), takes the author to task for schematism, claiming that her "positive heroes" are lifeless, intellectually and morally deficient and awkwardly conceived. The book appears to have faults common to most Communist literature and is an illustration of what the reviewer is generally confronted with:

"... The negative characters are opposed by positive heroes. Unfortunately, the latter are pale and unconvincing. First, there is Oranski, a Party member, architect, and ardent educator of youth, who wants to create art consciously and whose ideological basis fits the present reality. Oranski is perhaps the most clearly defined character in the book, but even he is a man without a past, even he lacks the strength and will to fight. . . . Next on the list is Oga Gorzyska, a member of the ZMP [Polish Youth Association], a heroine who neither eats nor drinks, but talks and lives. Her unbelievable, almost physically impossible perseverance and diligence is not sufficiently motivated. The author explains it simply by saying that 'there was in her some kind of instinct for sacrifice, making her act even before she had time to weigh all the circumstances or to make reasonable decisions'. . . . Another positive hero is Jankowski, a young engineer who reaches the Party after [abandoning] his petty-bourgeois attitude towards work which he considered a means for living well and pleasantly. . . . Jankowski does not, however, represent any particular values in comparison with the old world. His transformation is described as [having taken place] at a gallop, by a few words. . . . The portrait of Kasia Wojnowska is similarly constructed. She decides to do the most unreasonable thing in revenge for her unrequited love for the plant director, Bostel. She writes a report sharply criticizing his bureau of projects. Her information proves to be false and she almost loses her job, lodgings, and the friendship of her comrades. According to the author, Kasia is a Party activist and a person of many merits but the reader finds her rather unpleasant and unworthy. . . .

"The gallery of positive heroes is completed by Gawrys who unfortunately is merely another flower in the bouquet of schematic Party secretaries. . . . The author tries to show that Gawrys is only one member of the collective, but in reality he is the collective. We hear nothing about ZMP although we know that it does exist in the office and even has a chairman. . . .

"The intellectual poverty of the heroes, the absence or sketchy portrayal of their internal lives results in the fact that these people do not change, or grow up, and that the country's transformation is effected outside their field of vision. The artistic consequences of the above-mentioned shortcomings . . . are significant. Due to the



Title: Books are a Great Power  
Caption: Who Is Guilty?

*Literaturen Front* (Sofia), January 14, 1954

author's desire to describe everything she can possibly think of . . . she abbreviates and patches. Every person in the book is described only in so far as he is necessary to the author's solution of particular problems. Thus one hero is seen only in profile: others show us their ears, hands or feet only—the rest is blurred."

Polish critics not only have the task of reviewing books put out by Communist writers, but also literature produced by Catholic authors. In the main, the critics' duty is to oppose Catholicism with Marxism-Leninism, and Catholic books are almost certain to receive rough treatment by Party reviewers. Adopting a satirical, scathing attitude—which is rare in discussions of Communist art—critic Henryk Bereza voiced his opinion of the Catholic novel, *The Walking Trees*, in the January 31, 1954 issue of *Zycie Literackie* (Cracow):

"I shall not linger too much over Dobraczynski's abilities as a satirist. Defending porcelain against elephants seems to be the main purpose of his book, in which his hero, a writer, . . . is almost impossible for an ordinary mortal to understand. . . . Seeing that I am absolutely incapable of understanding the mystical allusions in Dobraczynski's book, my role as a critic will be that of an elephant in a china shop. I would like to be a well-mannered elephant, however, and not shove my way in, being content merely to look through the windows. This means that I do not consider myself well-equipped to grasp the sense of . . . Christine's deliberations on the subject of sin, grace, saintliness; the admirers of Dobraczynski's book could not enlighten me on this matter. They themselves could not explain . . . the connection these deliberations are supposed to have with the facts related in the novel. . . .

"Standardization, shallowness, showing off in terms of the 'grand world,' the 'grand adventure,' and the 'conflicts of grand people,' characterize [Dobraczynski's book]. . . . It is not merely a coincidence that one detects a com-



plete artistic capitulation . . . and absence of good taste. It is not a matter of creative talent only. It is simply caused by the writer's having succumbed to the pressure of the petty-bourgeois reader."

### Controversy

Although Communist critics are not notably daring, literary controversies do arise. These disputes do not involve personal taste or different aesthetic standards but center on the question of whether or not a book has fulfilled political requirements. On occasion, a critic may approve a book which is later denounced for advocating "bourgeois prejudice"; or a critic may pan a work for its "anti-Socialist" attitude only to discover that the Party considers it satisfactory. The Party's judgment must be accepted as the final word on the matter and an erring critic runs the risk of losing his job and damaging his reputation. In 1952, a controversy arose in Bulgaria over a novel called *Tiutiun* (Tobacco). It began when critic Pantalei Zarev roundly attacked author Dimitar Dimov for his "bourgeois predilections." This attack, printed in *Literaturni Front* (Sofia), March 6, 1952, infuriated Dimov's Communist supporters, and the Party newspaper *Rabotnicheskio Delo* rallied to his defense. Zarev was sharply rebuked and *Tiutiun* acclaimed a fine example of "Socialist realism." The point at issue was not Dimov's artistic ability but his concept of the "class struggle." Critic Zarev carped as follows:

"In contemporary literature there are works in which the typical and the characteristic are poorly and schematically expressed. . . . Such is the case in Dimitar Dimov's voluminous novel. . . . This writer is not a typical representative of our present Socialist-realist literature. . . . He is to a great extent under the influence of bourgeois Western literature. . . . He is emotional about the sexual attributes of his heroes, about the subconscious which influences their behavior.

"The novel . . . is based on the idea of exposing the Bulgarian bourgeoisie. . . . [But] is it correct from the Socialist viewpoint to ignore the actual historical heroes of the period and concentrate on the personal love of Irina? . . . His major heroes are negative, members of the bourgeois class . . . and are presented in such a way that they attract the reader's sympathy. . . .

"The unhealthy influence of bourgeois literature on the writer is evident everywhere. . . . He has not created women with the admirable qualities of Liliana Dimitrova, etc. [Communist guerillas]. . . . His Varvara knows the philosophy of Marxism . . . but she is unable to control her biological instincts. . . . As a result, the bourgeois Irina is praised for her moral forces and inaccessibility, while Varvara, the Communist, is degraded. . . . Max, the Communist and the only bearer of the true Dimitrov course in the Party, commits suicide in a state of psychic depression and loss of will power. . . .

"The main fault of Dimov's novel comes from his incorrect philosophy according to which his heroes are outstanding by their biological background [sic] and individual qualities, instead of the nobility of their social ideals. . . . His lovers . . . are not attracted to each other by their social optimism, by the struggle for the victory



This cartoon appeared in *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), November 22, 1953, along with the article on page 31.

of the collective. Dimov is a prisoner of the bourgeois, Freudian, idealistic concept of the individual. . . . He is too objective . . . he is romantic—qualities which are contrary to our realism. . . . Dimov's new work, does not answer to the practical, educational and ideological requirements of our new times."

Leaping to Dimov's defense, *Rabotnicheskio Delo* (Sofia), March 16, 1952, accused Zarev and his colleagues of "Talmudism" and thoughtless reviewing:

"What is there in this novel which so disturbs our self-satisfied 'gods' of literary criticism?

"In his novel . . . Dimov points out how . . . the anti-popular bourgeoisie robbed the people, sold them to foreign imperialism, and imposed their anti-national policy and terrible terrorism on the working masses struggling for their rights. . . . An artistically described flock of exploiters, parasites, traitors to the fatherland, people's assassins . . . Dimov realistically describes the strikes, street riots, guerilla movement with such heroic figures as Varvara, Spassuna. . . . The novel ends with the people's victorious uprising [accomplished] with decisive help from the Soviet Army. . . . Our youth, our workers reading this novel will see from what bloody paws our country has been saved and consequently how great is the merit of the Communist Party and the mighty Soviet Union. . . . This novel is a serious warning and an inspiration for revolutionary vigilance . . . a sharp weapon in the peace struggle. . . .

"This is the way this work should have been criticized; our literature must be proud of this novel. . . .

"Instead, after three days of discussion in the Union of Bulgarian Writers, some of our 'competent' critics . . . 'cut Dimov down' and threw him into the backyard before the amazed Bulgarian public, which was accused, no less, of having spoiled, not to say pornographic, taste. . . . Zarev's conduct exposed the basic faults of our lit-

## Try to Be Wise . . .

*The Communist critic's inability to deal competently with the ideological contents of a book—not to mention its artistic values—was illustrated in a satirical article in the November 22, 1953 issue of Nowa Kultura (Warsaw). Entitled "With the Scissors," the article contained excerpts of conflicting reviews on Marian Brandys' novel, The Beginning of a Story. The impression created by these excerpts is that the critics either never read the book or that they were more concerned with toeing Party line than evaluating the novel.*

Having read Marian Brandys' *The Beginning of a Story*, I wanted to form a correct opinion about the book and therefore carefully began to study the reviews published in various periodicals and newspapers. Below are the results of my work:

"*The Beginning of a Story* is a profoundly human story, optimistic and filled with the romanticism of Socialist construction. Brandys does not polish life but presents it in its severe truth and real greatness. . . . Calmly, and without empty enthusiasm, the author describes the grandeur of the changes brought about by great effort in a struggle against nature and the class enemy. With implicit pride he speaks of the effort of hundreds of brains and hands . . . building a powerful city and foundry. We are given many clearly drawn and psychologically sound descriptions of Nowa Huta builders who are presented against a background of dialectical development."

*Nowa Kultura*, August 12, 1951

"*The Beginning of a Story* . . . belongs to the category of books in which an artistic and ideological generalization is not supported by a full realism in the treatment of events and figures. . . . The author's attitude to the problem of Nowa Huta is somewhat limited . . . because of the shallow psychology of his characters who are . . . often presented in a simplified manner. . . . We do not grasp a complete picture of the powerful construction work; we lack concrete information about the great object of our Six Year Plan; conflicts and solutions to them are presented superficially."

*Nowa Kultura*, June 8, 1952

"The nature of Soviet help has been presented magnificently in *The Beginning of a Story*: the enthusiasm of Soviet engineers giving their rich experiences to Polish engineers and Polish construction."

*Nowa Kultura*, August 12, 1952

"In the beginning of his book Brandys barely mentions the significance of Soviet help. . . . The reader will not be able to form even a vague idea of the importance of the USSR's brotherly help, without which it would have been impossible to begin construction of this industrial giant. (Without dealing with Soviet help) a picture of Nowa Huta cannot be clear."

*Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), March 1, 1952

"The author has managed to emphasize the Party's organizational and educational role, which is similar to that of the human blood stream which gives life to even the small cell in the organism. . . . The Party carries out its activity with the help of the ZMP (Youth Organization) among the youths employed at the construction site. . . . In many instances the author shows that whenever this blood system fails, the entire organism begins to suffer."

*Trybuna Ludu*, March 1, 1952

"The Party's role and work has been treated very superficially or not at all by the author. How interesting it would be to read a description of a Party meeting or a detailed description of a production conference convened by the Party. . . . More also should have been said by the author on the subject of Party help in the work of trade unions and the ZMP."

*Głos Pracy*, October 12, 1951

"The troubles and affairs of Peter and Maria, Poczay and Stefka . . . have been clearly described along with many other new and realistic 'living' facts which have been raised by the author to the rank of literary symbols. None of the characters in the book, not one of the conflicts, are schematic or given routine-like treatment."

*Nowa Kultura*, August 8, 1951

"The affair of Stefka and Jurek leaves the reader completely indifferent. The characters are too pale and schematic . . . and mere illustrations of certain social situations presented in the book."

*Nowa Kultura*, October 21, 1951

"Marian Brandys' *The Beginning of a Story* is completely different from the stories and novels burdened with schematism and filled with sugary optimism."

*Tworzonec*, August, 1951

"Schematism? There is plenty of it in Brandys' book."

*Zycie Literackie*, September 16, 1951

erary criticism. It shows that [those critics] who attacked Dimov's work are suffering from megalomania proportionate to their inability to fulfill their literary tasks. . . . From their criticism of *Tiutium*, it is clear that they do not understand Socialist realism correctly. . . . Such 'critics' make a caricature of Socialist realism and transform it into bone dry dogma. . . . They do not learn from Soviet literature. The guilt of the Union of Bulgarian Writers is serious . . . because no steps have been taken against Talmudism, sectarianism and individual taste in our criticism."

The inevitable outcome of this virulent attack was that all Communist newspapers immediately praised *Tiutium* to the skies, and the erring *Literaturen Front*, after reprinting the *Rabotnichesko Delo* article in full, presented the apologies of the Union of Bulgarian Writers.

A similar literary controversy raged in Hungary over a novel called *Felelet* (Answer) by Tibor Dery. The first volume, which appeared in 1950, received a very favorable review from critic Andor Nemeth, who at that time was editor-in-chief of *Csillag*, the nation's leading literary magazine. Nemeth said that the book was to be commended because it was not merely a "Party work." The main character in the novel was a young proletarian, Balint Kope, but the real hero emerged as Zeno Farkas, a university professor who, despite his individualism and opposition to collectivization, was described as an appealing and interesting personality. Keeping this fact in mind, Marton Horvath sharply criticized Nemeth's review in the March 1950 issue of *Csillag*: "More than once Dery has been praised for exactly those features of his work which are incorrect, which are of bourgeois character and belong to the past. . . . Andor Nemeth is still bent on eliminating the Party political character from our literature."

Shortly after this rebuke, Nemeth was removed from his post on *Csillag*. But the controversy did not end there. The second volume of Dery's novel, which appeared in 1952, created an even greater furor. Minister of People's Education, Jozsef Revai, wrote a study on it entitled *Comments on a Novel* (Budapest) 1952, in which he said: "Can an author be an asset to the Party and Government if, under the pretext of protecting the author's right to say what he wants in the way he wants, he seeks to sever literature from the interests of the people, the Party and the State—that is, from politics—and thereby creates new strongholds for non-political literature?"

Taking their cue from Jozsef Revai, all the Communist critics fell into line and had a field day over Dery's novel. Writing in the June 1952 issue of *Csillag*, critic Peter Nagy exclaimed: "In this novel the workers and bourgeois world are completely separated. Consequently, even the possibility of a class struggle is eliminated. From a basically positive figure, Zeno Farkas becomes a repulsive person in the second volume. From a creature like that, we can learn nothing."

Another critic, Erno Urban, writing in *Irodalmi Ujsag* (Budapest), October 23, 1952, said: "Dery's outlook is basically incorrect: he is inclined to believe the bad rather than the good. In every book there must be an attempt to

educate people. One must always look on the whole work from the point of view of the Party line and not seek partial truth." Author Istvan Soter, writing in the September 25, 1952 issue of *Irodalmi Ujsag* had this to say: ". . . Revai's study made it clear to me that [a man like Zeno Farkas] can never become an active hero nor express the character of a whole period. . . . Zeno Farkas is not a type but an embittered, repulsive eccentric."

### The Critic's Dilemma

The critic's dilemma is further complicated by shifts in Party line. Since Monday's virtue may be Tuesday's crime, the critic must have the agility of a tightrope walker: he must beware of "literary schematism" but also of "individuality;" he must support all Party decrees and yet heed popular requirements; he must denounce dullness and yet ensure conformity. The pitfalls are numerous, and the harassed critic in Communist Europe too often finds that after he has jumped on a Party bandwagon, the Party has deserted the cart. Other difficulties arise from the fact that critics vary in their interpretations of Party commands and their willingness to abide by Party formulae: the ranks of critics include not only adamant Marxists, top Party theoreticians and literary opportunists, but also clandestine rebels who seek to voice their personal predilections while giving token support to regime demands.

The following illustrations of Party caprice throw light on the difficulties besetting Communists engaged in literary work.

After the Communists seized power in Hungary in 1945, the most prominent literary critic was Professor Gyorgy Lukacs, formerly a representative of "bourgeois aesthetics." Lukacs participated in the 1919 Commune, and after its defeat fled to Moscow where he presumably became qualified for his future role in Hungarian cultural life. However, Lukacs failed to satisfy Party experts; as examples to be followed by creative artists, he pointed to French, British and Russian authors regarded as forerunners of Communism, instead of to Soviet authors such as Simonov. For this, Lukacs was sharply rebuked and required to recant publicly in the July 1950 issue of *Tarsadalmi Szemle* (Budapest), the Party's ideological monthly.

"I committed a grave mistake when I was tardy and weak in adopting the new trend. I thought that the time of the revolutionary struggle would not dawn as rapidly as it did. . . . I did not emphasize what was new in world history, which makes Soviet literature superior to all bourgeois and classical literature. . . . Some Western articles 'defended me.' I am fully aware of the fact that the imperialist press did this . . . with the aim of disparaging the Hungarian People's Democracy."

Adulation of Soviet literature was the chief task of critics at the time of Lukacs' recantation. Eagerness to comply with Party demands, however, led to ridiculous extremes. Politburo member Marton Horvath labelled excesses in this direction as "leftist sectarianism," but he made it clear that this attitude was the product of untempered zeal and far less dangerous than that of Lukacs.



Writing in the March 1950 issue of *Tarsadalmi Szemle*, Horvath said:

"Our criticism showed signs of leftist sectarianism. In part, this was a rigid reaction to the mistakes committed by Comrade Lukacs. Our criticism was a leftist criticism insofar as it tried to make up in one single leap all we had left undone for years. While formerly we had taken no notice of Soviet literature, we now suddenly started to judge all Hungarian production by no lower standard than that of the perfect Soviet literature."

By going to extremes in supporting Party policy, the critic not only runs the risk of being "sectarian" but also nonsensical. Thus Party critic and writer, Otto Major, voiced his objections to meaningless cant in the November 1952 issue of *Csillag*:

"In the past year some of our leading critics, under the cloak of Marxist criticism, have been treating the readers of our magazines to a lot of idealistic rubbish. What is characteristic about these theories? Above all, conceit and bumptiousness. The cloven hoof of idealistic bumptiousness is apparent under the 'materialistic' cloak of these kind of theories."

Critics who seek to advance their own theories or who have the misfortune to misinterpret Party policy are also open to attack. Former Minister of People's Culture, Jozsef Revai, registered a bitter complaint in the October 23, 1952 issue of *Irodalmi Ujsag* (Budapest), accusing critics both of distorting Party policy and using it as a "mask for lack of vigilance and bourgeois ideology":

"There are many indications that under the pretext of a struggle against schematism, a number of bourgeois, philistine and reactionary phenomena have been revived in literature and criticism. A year ago, our Party took a definite stand against the view which opposed criticism and supported the expression of the author's instincts. . . . A month ago, the Party revealed that bourgeois literature had been revived in Dery's book *Felelet*. . . . How-



—Why are you reading the critics so carefully for the sixth time?

—Because they have praised me in such a complicated manner that I must study them to see whether I really haven't been stabbed in the back.

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), February 20, 1954

ever, many things are still wrong. This becomes evident in the passive attitude of the majority of our authors, in the opportunistic criticism of *Az Uj Hang* [a magazine of young authors], in the manner in which *Csillag* yields to bourgeois ideology, and in the errors and inconsistencies of *Irodalmi Ujsag*."

### Which Way Next?

Several months ago, critics were asked to change their tune so that it harmonized with the Hungarian New Course. For many of them this was an opportunity to be more frank than hitherto, although the danger of reading too much into Party pronouncements was undoubtedly inhibiting. In launching the new policy, the regime asserted its deep interest in the people, and economic concessions were accompanied by proclamations about more freedom of expression in the arts. Schematism, dull ideological tracts, and literature overburdened with Communist slogans and abstractions were rejected in favor of livelier prose which would reflect more realistically the normal course of human existence. This change of attitude—which so far has not been supported by definite concessions or demonstrated by striking results—was immediately acclaimed by writers and critics alike. In the August 15, 1953 issue of *Irodalmi Ujsag* (Budapest), Geza Hegedus seized the occasion to rebuke his fellow critics for sponsoring inferior art:

"Criticism has broken away from the masses. It has assailed everything that was interesting. At last it has been revealed that only one thing flourishes in our literature: boredom. Nobody ever asked the question whether or not what we wrote was beautiful. You [the critics] were indignant if a book was really interesting or exciting."

Other, more dogmatic critics, took issue with this point of view, probably fearing that Hegedus was opening the way to unpermissible liberalism. Agnes Heller replied to Hegedus in *Csillag*, November 1953:

"Two things are wrong with criticism; bureaucracy and liberalism. Liberalism in criticism is represented by Geza Hegedus, who opposes the realistic portrayal of everyday life and demands that literature present only the romantic events of holidays."

Party poet Lajos Konya, who is Secretary General of the Writers' Association, toed the Party line in a more typical fashion. Practising self-criticism, he wrote the following in the October 24, 1953 issue of *Irodalmi Ujsag*:

"I was wondering whether these people who opposed the poetic elaboration of daily political events were not right after all. As we see, the government has admitted that it was wrong to demand so many sacrifices from the people. I feel I am doubly to blame because I supported this demand for unnecessary sacrifice in the most convincing words, in the words of poetry. Moreover, was I right when I wrote about positive phenomena, characters pointing to the future? It was a kind of false optimism with which I, too, became obsessed."

But Konya also was attacked by his fellow critics for

## *The Adventures of a Writer Who Fought Against Schematism*

by Karol Szpalski

So he wrote a novel which was rather thick  
Inspiration had helped him to do it.  
The hero was just as he should be  
And the novel was good—fine—thought he  
In the book there was also a foe  
A class enemy from head to toe  
And the hero, like every proper hero  
Thrashed the enemy  
And exposed him just before zero hour.

So he sent his novel to. . .

And so?

It came back. No good.

Our writer did not say: the end.  
No sir, he began all over again.  
He reversed everything very subtly  
Adding here, cutting there, shortening where he could,  
And he strengthened the foe—kulak's game!  
And he made the enemy win.  
Some foe indeed from head to toe!  
The hero died of despair—  
He simply had to give in—  
Because the foe was hidden by kulaks.

He sent his novel to. . .

And so?

It came back. No good.

And so? Do you think the author was through?  
No sir. He began the book anew.  
He put the middle pages at the beginning  
Knowing that he had to play the game differently.  
The middle pages he made into a prologue  
And softened the hero—by just so much.  
The foe came to his senses at last  
So that when he met the hero again  
They sang a duet—a very popular song.  
They were rather surprised at each other  
For they had quarreled so much and so long;  
In the end there was a harmonious touch.

He sent his novel to. . .

And what?

It came back. No good.

Our writer, now rather bitter  
Gave up writing his book for a little.  
And he cried and wept—it's a fact—  
Whatever he wrote always came back.  
He had spent so much time and effort  
And he could have left it just as it was.  
So he wept and was angry and asked whomever he met:  
"What's wrong with the book—tell me what?"

"Aaa, you see, my dear man . . .

that's just it!"

*Zycie Literackie* (Cracow), January 17, 1954

going to the extreme in advocating the new trend. Apparently Hungarian critics are uncertain about what the new directives really mean and are afraid of stepping out of line. In setting down the paths to be followed, Jozsef Revai left much to the imagination. He praised writers other than the Soviets—a crime for which Lukacs had had to atone—but beyond this he said nothing which suggested far-reaching cultural liberties:

"Our people are looking forward . . . to new literary works which will live up to their expectations. . . . We often hear the complaint that new literary works . . . are not sufficiently attractive, colorful, interesting or varied. We must admit that neither our critics, our literary organization, nor our authors paid much attention to public opinion . . . which expected an interesting story, an animated description of adventures, and last but not least, love and romance in a book. . . . The popularity of Mikszath, Moricz, Gogol and Shakespeare is based on their yearning for beauty and truth which the cultural revolution brought about in our country."

### *Between the Lines*

What the Communists hope to achieve through their literature is illustrated most concretely by non-professional criticism published in the daily press. Ostensibly unedited,

this criticism is supposed to indicate the ordinary reader's reaction to a work of art. The real purpose of this criticism however, is to further Party policy. No reader who objects to a story or poem on grounds other than those permitted by the Party will see his criticism in print, and reader-criticism differs from professional criticism only in its untutored, "human tone." What is interesting about this grass roots criticism is that the reader, knowing the regime's purpose in asking for his opinion, often expresses between-the-lines disapproval of Communist policy.

Last spring *Literarni Noviny* (Prague) conducted a public opinion poll on a short story by Czechoslovak State Prizewinner K. F. Sedlacek. The story, called "Macurova Cesta" (Macura's Way), was written in support of the drastic May 30 currency reform and appeared in *Literarni Noviny's* June 8th issue. It begins with Macura's return home on Saturday, May 30 from a night brigade shift in the Ostrava mines. A conscientious worker and member of the Party plant organization, Macura has managed to save 20,000 *koruny*, and he thinks of all the things he intends to buy for himself and his family. When he arrives home, his family is listening to the radio. The currency reform and the end of rationing have just been announced. Macura's wife is ecstatic because she can now buy on the free market. Macura, however, has an entirely different

reaction. The reform has wiped out his savings. He hears the radio commentator reminding workers that they, too, must make sacrifices, but he cannot accept this. He feels cheated and deceived and cannot overcome his bitterness. The next day, however, light dawns; after thinking things through and talking matters over with his fellow workers, and after seeing shop windows suddenly filled with all sorts of goods, he understands that the Party has made a "just and wise decision."

The first reader-criticism of this story appeared in *Literarni Noviny*, July 25. Signed by a man called Josef Enderst, it revealed implicit opposition to the currency reform:

"Certainly it is a fine thing to write a story about a brigade worker. . . . But to let that decent guy, who slaved for a whole year so that he could buy something for his wife and kid, recover from the loss of a hard-earned twenty-thousand overnight . . . is an insult . . . to honest workers who, like Macura, have saved money by getting callouses on their hands. . . . The author made it easy for himself when he described the change in Macura's attitude: he described it as if he were imagining his own reaction as a 100 percent conscientious comrade. The real facts, however, were somewhat different. . . . To me, it would have seemed far more honest to have described how Macura swore, how he could not contain his fury about the currency reform, and how, in the end, the remnants of his bourgeois education were obvious—how he was so hurt by the loss of his money that . . . he could not see what a crushing blow it had been for the black marketeers and robbers of our state—how he thought only of how it affected him personally to lose the hard-earned money with which he wanted to make his family happy."

Other reviews, following Party line more closely, defended Macura's quick change of heart and the author's purpose. One review stated: "It is true, we have seen people get furious and upset about the currency reform, but not people like Macura. In such a great struggle for peace . . . it is not important to see the sweat on Macura's brow, but the blue uniforms at the plant gate. In my opinion, Comrade Sedlacek successfully described a sensible man, Macura, and not a bluffer and creator of panics." On August 22, *Literarni Noviny* printed another criticism upholding Party policy:

"I do not want to discuss whether or not the story is realistic, but I would like to give credit to Sedlacek for his alertness. We needed it at a time when so many of us were wavering for egotistic reasons. We needed to have before us the model of a hero. This, for me, was the main asset of Sedlacek's story."

Another reader, however, supported the first review, and probably voiced the feelings of many Czechoslovak citizens.

"I read Josef Enderst's review. . . . In my opinion one cannot get over the loss of such hard-earned money easily, just because that money was hard-earned and not accumulated by easy profits. Every conscientious worker who has been deprived of his savings . . . got over the



The above cartoon, printed in *Szpilki* (Warsaw), October 4, 1953, illustrates the Communist literary critic's frequent use of flattery. The critic is writing with a tube of vaseline.

loss after a time and understood what the currency reform aimed at. But it is not quite acceptable that this should have happened smoothly and quickly. Actually, the reader got the impression that in the days following the currency reform, the writer was not in contact with the reader."

### Self Criticism

The Communists themselves are aware of shortcomings in their literary criticism and discuss them constantly. This tendency is, in fact, one of the prominent features of Communist literary life. However, it is doubtful that these attempts to improve criticism will have any beneficial result so long as the conditions under which Communist critics work remain the same. That critics abandon their search for uniformity is, for example, a frequent plea in the Party press. Flying in the face of fact, these editorials insist that nothing is more alien to the spirit of Communism than fear, false devotion and enforced conformity. Thus, ignoring the effects of totalitarian rule, Polish critic Ludwik Flaszen pointed out the necessity of diversity in the cultural weekly, *Zycie Literackie* (Cracow), December 13, 1953:

"Our criticism has become somewhat stiff and apathetic. This is due, among other things, to the fact that some of us, particularly the younger critics, consider it a liberalist superstition to tolerate a diversity of opinions on matters as complicated as literary ones. They want to provide a common basis of judgment for all books. All those who happen to disagree . . . they consider almost enemies of People's Poland . . . and all this is done



in the tone of severe, experienced statesmen. . . . Others, fearing that they might otherwise be accused of aestheticism, formalism and psychologism [sic], and the devil knows what, whip out huge ideological guns and shoot at . . . sparrows—all this to prove that they are indeed of the correct opinion. It is as if Lichniak [a Catholic critic], in order to document his Catholicism, had to say three Hail Marys before . . . writing the shortest article. There is nothing more alien to Socialism, professional morality, a critic's horizon and an atmosphere suitable to literary creation, than the spirit of the Inquisition and hypocritical devotion. . . ."

Flaszen should have written, "There is nothing more alien to freedom than the spirit of the Inquisition," for under Communism the literary critic has had cause to know why he fears.

The effects of the stifled literary atmosphere in Communist Europe were perhaps best summed up by critic Henryk Markiewicz in the March 1952 issue of *Tworczosc* (Warsaw), the monthly of the Union of Polish Writers. In an article entitled, "Literary Criticism Between 1945-1951," Markiewicz traced the development of Marxist criticism in Poland and pointed out what he considered to be the "inevitable diseases of growth." Accusing Polish critics of dullness, conformity, timidity and disregard for artistic form, Markiewicz concluded that self-criticism was not only the "law and proof of growth," but the remedy for all ills. The symptoms indicate, however, that a far more radical panacea is required:

"In the works of our younger critics . . . there sometimes appeared a peculiar form of vulgar sociologism. The critics limited [themselves] to a single issue: does the author draw a correct analogy between his heroes' code of behavior and economic conditions, and are his heroes and their fate typical in a given community? If so, the book was approved and labelled realistic. The problem of artistic style—to avoid any accusations about formalism—was ignored. . . ."

"The majority of reviews on artistic prose which one comes across in the press create the impression that they were written not on the basis of the book itself but on its precis. Why so? Because the critics put all their energy into reconstructing the contents of a book and estimating its educational and political value. The problem of artistic values . . . is considered unimportant. . . ."

"While reviews are formulated more precisely and clearly, the style, unfortunately, is generally dry, pauperized and standardized, and filled with the most common journalistic platitudes. Perhaps the worst thing is that if the author's name were not printed above an article, even the most careful study would not permit us to distinguish who had written it."

Regardless of these symptoms and their obvious roots in fear, the Communists insist that ideological weaknesses

are the source of most shortcomings. Markiewicz himself stated that the critics' inadequate knowledge of Marxist theory had made it necessary for the State to assume responsibility for aesthetic principles—a rather indirect way of saying that critics are not critics but literary controllers. The results of these weaknesses, Markiewicz said, were particularly manifest in the treatment of Polish Catholic writers, who embody all the crimes in the Marxist book:

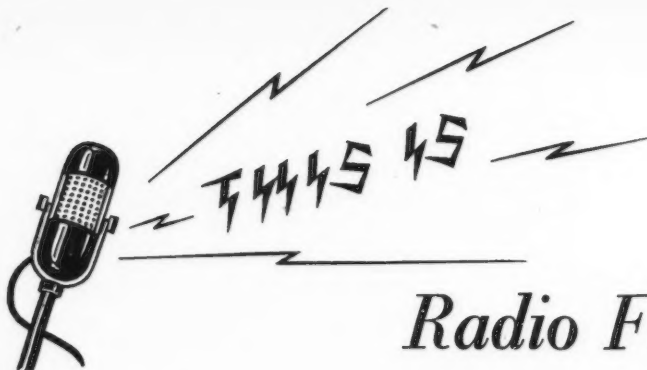
"Our critics are afraid to postulate and theorize. They are also afraid to draw conclusions. . . . They do not define their attitude towards the theoretical and critical statements of Catholic publicists who, on the grounds of principle, emphasize their resistance in the struggle for a new culture in Poland. . . . Catholic universalism does not hesitate to use any means it can find: Freudianism, existentialism, surrealism, or even American jazz; in brief, it does not hesitate to use anything that might prove useful to the bourgeoisie. . . . The activity of Catholic publicists and critics . . . has not yet been dealt with properly by Marxist criticism."

A Romanian critic, writing in *Contemporanul* (Bucharest), February 26, also underscored ideological shortcomings, claiming that any critic who was politically confused was incapable of estimating a work of art:

"Certain reviews are flat and descriptive. Instead of courageously revealing and promoting everything that is advanced in a writer's work so that ideological shortcomings can be combated, they are limited to registering the publication of books by giving perfunctory characterizations of the heroes and summarizing the plot. At times, these reviews contain timid, marginal notes which assess—often arbitrarily—the 'merits and faults' of these works. . . . Because [of the ideological deficiencies of many critics] their evaluation of various characters and situations is unconvincing. Instead of basing their affirmations scientifically on Marxist-Leninist aesthetic concepts, these reviewers merely summarize certain episodes which they deem good or bad. . . . They fail to discuss the work of art in the light of great problems of our entire literature and way of life. . . . Lack of political criteria in the appraisal of a work of art leads the authors of such criticism into a morass of bourgeois objectivism and bourgeois formalism."

What has happened, however, is that Marxist criticism is floundering in a morass of Party requirements, and it is unlikely, under the present system of bureaucratic control, that Communist criticism will ever be distinguished by boldness or profundity. The main task of Communist literary critics is to serve the regime rather than art, and they are doomed to failure when they try, as required, to serve both masters at once.





## Radio Free Europe

Tonight, in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, men, women and children will gather around radios tuned to the voices of their countrymen in the West, bringing them the news of the free world, the knowledge that they are not forgotten, and the hope of their future liberation. Radio Free Europe, operating as a home service from abroad, broadcasts over a network of 22 transmitters to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, competing directly with all Satellite Communist stations.

### This Is the Voice of Free Poland . . .

#### Exports to the Soviet Bloc?

The problem of East-West trade, which is the subject of heated discussion on both sides of the Iron Curtain, is not limited to the question of strategic raw materials and goods. Russia has recently started making strenuous efforts to purchase the largest possible amount of foodstuffs, and expressed its willingness to pay for them in gold or so-called "hard" currency.

Now, the question is: should meat, butter, grain and other foodstuffs be exported to the Soviet Bloc in Europe? There is no unanimity of viewpoint in the United States on this matter. Public opinion is divided.

The controversy on this topic in American newspapers does not involve economic considerations. There is an enormous surplus of foodstuffs in the United States; the value of foodstuffs owned by the United States government exceeds six billion dollars. Although America supplies food to several countries, it could easily increase its exports in this field. The whole issue is raised on a different level. Recently a U.S. Congressman said to his friends that he would be able to form a clear opinion on exports to the Soviet bloc if he knew what the Iron Curtain populations rather than the Communist governments were thinking about the whole matter.

What is it all about?

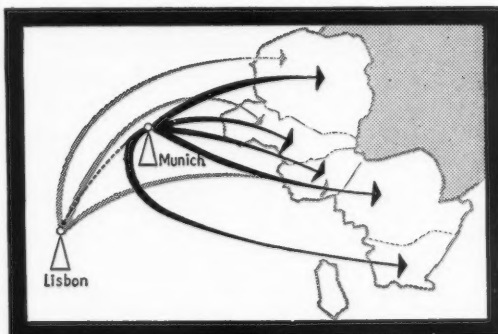
As we know, the Soviet government solemnly promised its subjects a radical rise in the standard of living. Two years hence, said Nikita Khrushchev, the consumption of basic food commodities, such as sugar, meat, etc., will be 200-300 percent higher. If we descend from the heights of demagogic daydreaming to the level of stern reality, the

raising of food consumption in Russia by even 30 percent would necessitate considerable increase of imports.

But why would America and other Western countries be opposed to exporting food to the Iron Curtain countries? Butter, meat, and sugar are not strategic commodities. However, the issue is not simple.

Adversaries of export to Soviet Russia and her Satellites recall past experience. The American press draws attention to the story of American exports to Japan on the eve of

Pearl Harbor: raw materials sent to Japan by American firms immeasurably helped Japan to prepare the attack on the United States. No less bitter a lesson was learned by the Scandinavian countries during the Second World War, in connection with the export of iron ore to Nazi Germany. With the tanks made out of this iron ore, Nazi Germany could crush Norway's resistance in no time. Recalling these experiences, those who oppose exporting food



to the Soviet bloc argue that under the present conditions, when we have to deal with totalitarian regimes, grain, meat or butter also become strategic materials, which may strengthen the Communist governments in two ways. First, any relief in the field of consumer goods production would automatically allow diversion of manpower and resources to war production, and, second, heavy purchases of food abroad would help the Kremlin to overcome its unpopularity on the domestic front.

The fact that the area involved includes not only Soviet Russia but also the Communist-occupied countries of Europe makes the problem more complicated. As regards Soviet Russia, the decision to prohibit export of food to this country is justified simply by the state of the Cold War and the Kremlin's complete disregard of moral consid-

erations. Yes, but why should the ill-fed masses of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Baltic countries be made to suffer for the acts and policies of Soviet totalitarianism? Here lies the gist of the whole problem. If one could export food to Poland and the other Satellite countries without fear that a tremendous part, if not all, of it would eventually go to Russia. . . .

If. . . . There is not a shadow of a doubt about the situation. Not only politically and militarily, but also economically, Moscow is the center of the Soviet orbit, and its orders are law in the Satellite countries. Russia is already despoiling the Satellites of all their food stocks. The countries which have a food surplus—Poland and Hungary, for instance—are ill-fed only because they are forced to export their products to Soviet Russia.

Small wonder that the debate on food exports to the Soviet bloc is very lively in the United States.

In talking to Polish friends, the above-mentioned Congressman formulated his doubts in the following manner: Before we decide to export, we must be convinced that our decision, whose object is to alleviate the plight of the oppressed nations, will not instead contribute to prolonging the period of their enslavement.

### This Is the Voice of Free Czechoslovakia . . .

#### *Zapotocky's Gymnastics*

Mister President Zapotocky is not sparing with his words. On the contrary, he knows everything, he tells everything, he understands everything.

On Saturday afternoon he appeared in the role of specialist for physical education and sports. Mr. President Zapotocky is not a modest man. Nevertheless, even he felt he was cutting rather an awkward figure as an expert in physical education and sports. That is why, before starting his speech, he introduced himself as a Sokol-Youth member and retired president of a Kladno sport club. He added that he has always been interested in physical education and the sports movement. Yes, even Zapotocky used to attack the parallel bars and knows hockey from football. Besides that, he even once saw a Sokol Festival parade.

Only, he didn't enjoy the Sokol parade much. It was in July, in 1948. Comrade Zapotocky was standing with the ill-famed Gottwalds on the main dais, hoping that the masses of Sokols wouldn't notice, in the confusion of cheering and enthusiasm, that none of them had any right to stand on that tribune. But he was disappointed. The masses of Sokols did recognize it. And so Comrade Zapotocky had to smile fixedly for long hours and wave to the empty space in vain. To the emptiness formed by hundreds of thousands of marching Sokols who did not even look at him.

Everybody saw it but nobody could mention it. Only when the participants of the festival had gone home did Zapotocky remember what the festival days used to be like. From the point of view of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the 11th Sokol Festival was a catastrophic failure. That's why Mr. Zapotocky stressed that the next

Festival would have to be much better, more conscientiously, carefully and attentively prepared.

In a certain sense, Zapotocky has admitted that the Communist attempt to seduce the Czechoslovak Sokol has failed. It was to no avail that after May 1945 the whole Central Committee of the CP put on the Sokol uniform and Comrade Gottwald almost declared himself Tyrs' (Sokol founder) grandchild. The sudden new-born crop of Sokols in the lap of the Czechoslovak section of the Communist International has not brought the political results the CP had in mind. Only the vestibule of the Sokol had been opened to the new members, not its head and heart. In Sokol the Communists could not communize. In many cases just the opposite happened. Many Communists have *sokolized* themselves.

It cannot be denied that the CP of Czechoslovakia has done everything possible since 1948 in order that the next Festival, scheduled for this year, would look "better and different" from the last one. And so President Zapotocky, instead of announcing this spring that the 12th Sokol Festival will take place in three months, admits now that he cannot keep his promise. The CP has not succeeded in preparing the Sokol Festival much better, more conscientiously, carefully and attentively, as it intended to. The CP has not been able to work the Sokol over, tame it, adapt it. It was only able to ruin it. In 1954 there will be no Sokol Festival. For 1955 a *Spartakiade* is scheduled. The play is over.

Mr. Zapotocky also spoke about the mass character of sports. He said that the mass character of Soviet physical culture has to be an example to us. A curious example. We saw the Soviet athletes at the last Sokol Festival. Theirs were the outstanding performances of several "elite" professionals. But where was the mass character? That appeared only a little later. It was the Czechoslovak mass character of the tens of thousands of Sokols in the stadium, and hundreds of thousands of gymnasts who could not get into the largest stadium in the world.

No, the Soviet mass character is only a hollow slogan. This is not the first time that dictators have wanted to bring up an elite of State runners and prize-fighters for their own glory. Hitler and Mussolini used to expound on the mass-effect of physical training. Mr. Zapotocky also points out that physical education has a political meaning. Yes, it has. It can also have a military meaning. Good athletes often grow into good soldiers. Aren't sports also a good preparation for someone who climbs cornices (for burglary) or who swiftly leaps at the throat of his victims? Many good and useful things can be misused—physical education and sports too.

But that is Mr. Zapotocky. The sportsmen are something else. They like sports for sports' sake, and not for the sake of some third interested party.

That will be the difference between the Festivals as they used to be and the scheduled *Spartakiade*. It is not to be a parade of Czechoslovakia's youth and vigor, but an exhibition of physically well-developed human material which is kept in store by the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP for whatever disposition it chooses to make of it.

The news on the scheduled *Spartakiade* is not good news. But Zapotocky could have announced something still worse: that he is going to arrange the exhibition of his physically-trained State reserves under the name of the 12th Sokol Festival. Well, in this respect we are content. Nobody is trying to take their Spartakiade away from the Communists, but the 12th Sokol Festival will be arranged by the Sokols.

## This Is the Voice of Free Poland . . .

### Honest Admission

The Polish section of Radio Free Europe composed the following rejoinders to the slip of tongue made by Konstanty Rokossowski, the former Soviet Army Marshal who is now Poland's Minister of National Defense, in his address to the Party Congress in Warsaw on March 10.

Rokossowski's words (monitored by Radio Free Europe and tape-recorded for playback into Poland) were: "*The resolution of the Ninth Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the PZPR [Polish Communist Party] which are of such importance to your country, also have a tremendous significance for the growth of our army.*"

You are honest, Rokossowski,  
Thanks for the cue,  
It's "*your* army  
In *our* country":  
Alas, too true.

The Soviet Marshal in command of the army in Poland has completely lost track of what is Polish and what is Soviet. . . . A sign of split personality typical of people who serve two masters.

*Your* country and *our* army—you are perfectly right!  
The country is *ours* and the land is *ours*—but the occupation is *yours*.

Take away *your* Soviet marshals, and both the country and the army will be *ours* again.

Freud chuckles when Konstanty  
Gets into a mess  
Sabotage or *lapsus linguae*?  
That's for the UB\* to guess.

The subconscious is dangerous  
Konstanty slipped quite badly,  
Now we'll call him Nonsense-Marshall  
And he'll rue it sadly.

You are right, Rokossowski, when you say *your* country about Poland! But do not cloud the issue. The country is *ours*, Polish; the army is Soviet, and that is the only reason the Party has any existence at all.

For "*your*" country and "*our*" army! A wonderful admission! *Your* country under *our* Soviet boot and *your*

youth in *our* Soviet army. Bravo, Rokossowski! You let the cat out of the bag!

This *yours* and *ours* is not accidental. Rokossowski only forgot to repeat the words he addressed in October 1946 to the TPPR\*\* delegation in Legnica: "As a soldier, officer and Marshal of the Soviet Union, I thank you very much in the name of the Red Army and of my country."

Rokossowski played his own part: that of Marshal of the Soviet Army in *our* occupied country.

## This Is the Voice of Free Hungary . . .

### Communist Editing

The Hungarian State Book Distributing Enterprise recently issued an extensive work titled *Bibliography of Political Works-1945 to 1952*. This volume has 160 pages dense with book titles and other data. Our listeners will find it in every Hungarian public library and may see for themselves that it is an imposing volume. Whoever mulls through the close-packed print will see that much has been written on politics in Hungary between 1945 and 1952. The volume's apparent aim is to give an effective picture of post-war Hungarian political activity. Under these circumstances, it is worth noting that the State Book Distributing Enterprise did not go as far as it might have in assembling the bibliography, that it failed to exploit every possible means for achieving an effect, although this is every good propagandist's first duty. We may say that this bibliography is not even complete, in listing for the People's Democratic political world all the books published in Hungary on this subject. In fact, the bibliography is decidedly and strikingly incomplete.

Readers abroad may more easily and quickly inform themselves of the deficiencies than readers back home. Anyone who sits down in a large public library in Paris and surrounds himself with Hungarian books quickly realizes that the bibliography has indeed failed to list a number of books in the Hungarian language, and published in Hungary, and of an unquestionably political nature, of which certainly some mention should have been made in the bibliography. The first such book is a large volume like an album. Its title: *From Liberation to Union; the Hungarian Communist Party's Fight for Hungarian Democracy*. It was published in 1948 in Budapest by the Szikra Firm—the official Communist publishing house—on the occasion of the memorable day when the former Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party merged, and it was published with the avowed intention of illuminating the significance of this political merger. In those days they distributed it free to everyone who showed the slightest interest, and even to those who showed no interest at all. Later, it suddenly vanished from Party headquarters, from reading rooms, and display windows. Its Communist origin did not have a particularly beneficent effect on the life

\* The Polish security police.

\*\* Polish-Soviet Friendship Society.



time of this work. And now it has even been omitted from the list of Communist political works. We may search till doomsday in the thick bibliography without finding any trace of the fact that a record of the party merger was ever published in Budapest.

By now it would be difficult to investigate the cause of this cold-shouldering on the spot, but a visitor to Paris libraries can quietly leaf through the book. Right on the first page he finds something to note. Photographs cover that page. In the center, Matyas Rakosi, an ingratiating smile on his lips. Next to him, on the right, the quondam Minister of the Interior, who, it will be remembered, played a large part in forcing the merger. A dark, grim-faced young man, every line of his face morose, ill-humored and impatient—the photographer could not even evoke a colorless smile like Rakosi's. His name: Laszlo Rajk. Opposite him, on Rakosi's right, the portrait of John Kadar. Most Party members doubtless recall how warmly both, in fact all three, were cheered by the Congress at which the fusion of the parties was announced. Leafing on through the album, we see on page 56, for example, Laszlo Rajk, this time orating to a huge crowd, with a sweeping gesture of his arms. The caption: "Comrade Laszlo Rajk, the iron-handed Minister of the Interior, unmasks conspirators against the People's Democracy, as hundreds of thousands listen." Not long afterward, it turned out that the iron-handed Minister of the Interior was himself a conspirator against the People's Democracy. On the word of the people's prosecutor we must even assume that he had already delivered trusting Communist comrades to the police at a time when most of the listeners in this picture were still having their shoes buttoned for them by their fond mothers.

Continuing, we see preserved for posterity the touching scene in which Rakosi, with an unmistakably blissful smile, shakes the hand of Laszlo Rajk, congratulating him on his good work in energetically concluding the Social Democratic merger. On page 96, Arpad Szakasits is the recipient of a similarly touching smile for his share in the unification. This time a background is also visible: from the presidential dais the handclasp is rapturously observed by George Marosan and Stephen Riesz. The scene's significance is unequivocally stated in the album which quotes this portion of Rakosi's speech: "Special and unforgettable are the merits of Comrades Szakasits and Marosan." A notation in brackets records the overwhelming storm of applause that interrupted this part of Rakosi's speech. When the tumult died down, Rakosi thus continued: "My friend, Comrade Szakasits, and I have now been battling for the fourth year, shoulder to shoulder. His was no easy task, but a decade of labor experience and his good proletarian instinct helped him over every obstacle. Now too, from the Congress's tribune, I wish him every success in his work." We may remark that these gracious good wishes were not realized to any notable extent.

## Spot

*In East Berlin, the tired worker came home after a demonstration. How was it? asked his wife. All right, but I have a sore throat; for three hours I had to yell "Go home." Well, but do you think the Russians could understand, when you shouted it in English?*

Szakasits, Riesz, Marosan, Rajk—People's Democratic bigwigs would like to bury them forever, as well as every other album containing photos of these four. Yet, aside from this, there are plenty of other interesting things in the album. Take, for instance, the 20th page, portraying Imre Nagy, the land-distributing Cabinet Minister. He is presenting ornate "deeds" to the newfledged owners of farms, who carry large placards with inscriptions such as "We won't give back the land!" and "Death to anyone who lays a hand on our property!" What noteworthy historical scenes, and truly momentous political events! The People's Democracy nowadays, strangely enough, does not wish to boast of them, in fact refuses even to list them.

Related to this album is another volume, also available in Western libraries. The Vilagossag Printing Establishment issued it, at Budapest. Its title: *For the Unity of the Working Class*. It contains mainly the speeches delivered on the occasion of the so-called union of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties. Again we glimpse the ubiquitous George Marosan; that is, his photographic likeness, since by now it would be difficult to produce him in the flesh. He pleasantly relates how he and eight others seized the Social Democratic Party for the Communists. The other "freebooters" too are to be seen in this volume, which lists them as members of the then-elected Presidium. Reading their names, one gets a whiff of the mouldy air of the crypt. Imre Vajda, Paul Justus, Zoltan Horvath and the rest—a strange list, wouldn't you say, dear listeners? Out of 451 delegates of the Union Congress, so far 151 are dead and not of natural causes, another 76 are lying low somewhere, afraid to give their own names if someone asks. From the political committee 5 out of 14, from the organizing committee 4 out of 10, vanished with the assistance of clandestine or official executioners. And by now even the album designed to preserve their deeds for generations to come lies buried in the refuse heap. Dear listener. Though you cannot join us in looking through these banned pages, you may within yourself review events, and having done so, deduce for yourself where overzealousness in political collaboration leads in the Communist world. Be careful to save yourself from the fate of the Szakasitses, Rajks, Marosans and the others.



# Current Developments

*"The idea that the truth remains the truth is admissible in a philosophical club, but in the Party, the decisions of the congress are obligatory also upon those who doubt the correctness of a decision. . . . Our Party is strong through the fact that the decisions of the majority are obligatory upon all not only in form, but in substance."*

Kalinin, 1925

**E**MERGING as a pattern throughout the Iron Curtain area was an amplified emphasis on boosting coal, farm and industrial production. In Hungary, the Communists waged a campaign for "gaining the middle peasant as an ally"; in Czechoslovakia, the regime pilloried low worker productivity and the excessive amount of factory rejects; while in Bulgaria, attention was directed toward developing raw material reserves, building new mines and attaining planned coal targets. Also featured in the Satellite press were a Polish price reduction of food and consumer goods, and several trials which resulted in the conviction of Polish miners, Slovak "Slanskyite conspirators," and alleged CIC agents in Czechoslovakia, charged with espionage and attempts to disrupt the national committee elections.

## Czechoslovakia

Between April 21-24, the Bratislava Supreme Court tried and sentenced five prominent Communists as "Slanskyite conspirators and bourgeois-nationalist traitors." Gustav Husak, former Chairman of the Slovak Board of Commissioners was given life imprisonment, and defendants Laco Novomesky, former Commissioner of Education, Daniel Okalyi, former Commissioner of the Interior, Ivan Horvath, former Minister to Hungary, and Ladislav Holdos, former Commissioner of Ecclesiastical Affairs, were sent to prison for periods ranging from 10 to 22 years. As quoted by Radio Bratislava, April 26, the Prosecutor claimed that the accused had formed a subversive bourgeois-nationalist group in Slovakia and had carried out treason, sabotage and criminal activities for the "Western imperialists and against the national state interests of the Slovak people and the security and unity of the Czechoslovak State."

The trial, expected since 1951, is a continuation of the Party purge which began in 1949 and reached its peak in November 1952, when the chief members of the so-called

Slansky group were sentenced in Prague. The main issues of the trial were "Titoism, Trotskyism and Zionism." Later trials of "Slanskyite conspirators" were conducted on a slightly different basis. In the January trial of Slansky's deputy, Marie Svermova, the regime omitted the charge of Zionism and handed down sentences which were more lenient than the previous ones. The April trial was chiefly a Slovak affair and contained the specific charge of "separatism."

The current proceedings can be traced back to June 1950, when Husak and Novomesky were dismissed from their government posts and "politically tried" by the Ninth Congress of the Slovak Communist Party. Both men admitted their guilt in "favoring reactionary tendencies" and were pardoned. The Congress decided that they would be given further opportunity to prove their loyalty in other posts. Husak was appointed to the Secretariat of the Slovak Communist Party and Novomesky became Chairman of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Art in October 1950. However, at the February 1951 session of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, both men were expelled. They were put in prison a month previous to their official expulsion and have remained there ever since.

Last December 19, First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party, Karol Bacilek, intimated that both men would be brought to trial and that they would be used to discourage "separatist activities." Speaking at a Central Committee session in Bratislava, Bacilek said: "Bourgeois nationalism and its representatives in the ranks of the Party, Husak and Novomesky, were tried politically by the Ninth Congress. . . . However, it cannot be claimed that separatist tendencies have disappeared with them from Slovakia. They still show up in various places and in various forms, and occasionally penetrate even the ranks of Party members."

At the April trial, the defendants confessed to "separatist activities," and admitted conspiring with Vladimir Clementis, former Czechoslovak Foreign Minister sentenced at the

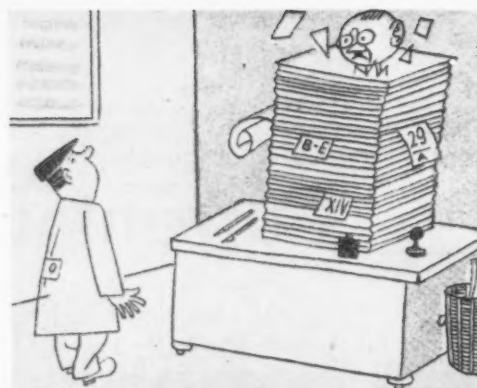
Slansky trial. In one of his self-incriminating statements, Novomesky said: "My hostile activities against the Czechoslovak Republic and its working class have their origin in bourgeois nationalism. The ideological and organizational roots of Slovak bourgeois nationalism go back to 1924-25, when, under the leadership of Vladimir Clementis and with my participation, the publication of the periodical *Dav* was begun."

The thoroughly unexplained contradiction that the regime and the Party had continued to keep these men in high Party posts could not pass unnoticed, although the regime attempted to give itself the omniscience of knowing their "oppositionist" histories back into the Twenties. As usual, the defendants went through the routine of "confession," giving political and philosophical analyses of the importance of their alleged crimes. The one exception was Husak. Radio Bratislava complained: "With stubbornness so typical of him, he denied and opposed even the clearest evidence and arguments by which the court, witnesses and the other defendants proved his guilt." Apparently, Husak even tried to present his "treacherous activities" as minor deviations and did his best to escape the Communist "justice" he himself helped establish.

### Pre-Election Trial

On April 27, the Prague Supreme Court put on trial six men accused of high treason and espionage as US agents who "attempted to realize imperialist war plans and interfere with the peaceful building of our working people." Two defendants were sentenced to death, one to life imprisonment, and two to 22 years in jail and the other to 25 years in jail. According to Radio Prague, April 27, one of the defendants, Bohumil Joska, was ordered by his "US masters" to disrupt preparations for the May 15 national committee elections "which, as the imperialists well know, will result in a further strengthening of our people's democratic order." In a commentary on April 29, *Rude Pravo* (Prague), elaborated on this charge, claiming that Joska "was directed to watch the election campaign, destroy the unity of the Czechoslovak electorate and prepare positions for the creation of a fifth column." Asserting that police vigilance had prevented realization of these plans, the *Rude Pravo* editorialist commented: "Our people were united and strong in the glorious February [coup] when they swept the treacherous Zenkl and Co. from their positions. They will remain united and vigilant even now, during election preparations. Nothing will upset their unity in the elections themselves or impair their great longing to live in peace and build peace in their Socialist country." Joska and the other defendants were also accused of smuggling enemy agents across the border, firing at frontier guards and supplying the CIC with important information.

That one individual was supposed to organize the sabotage of national committee elections is typical of the farcical nature of Communist charges. (There are about 20,000 national committees in the country, with some 200,000 members.) The chief purpose of the trial probably was to frighten Czechoslovak voters into obedience and to deter them from any action in the elections which might



The Bureaucrat: "Don't disturb me! Don't you see that I am up to my neck in work?"

Mlada Fronta (Prague), April 11, 1954

disrupt regime plans for obtaining a "vote of confidence." Although the election was another of the Communist ballot masquerades, the regime was intent on keeping the popular opposition from becoming organized and vocal.

### Productivity

In an April 30 ceremony at Prague Castle at which the best Socialist workers and collectives were awarded the Order of Work, regime leaders took the opportunity to deplore rising production costs. While praising shock-workers and Stakhanovites for over-fulfilling production norms, Communist officials complained bitterly about the apathy of labor in general and the unsatisfactory production techniques employed in industry. Vice-Premier Dolansky summed up the situation by stating that "production capacity is not sufficiently utilized, mass introduction of overtime is taking place, and the amount of rejects is increasing; all this leads to destruction of worker initiative."

Dolansky's complaint about inefficient production was only one of many issued by the regime in the past few months. On April 16, *Rude Pravo* (Prague) revealed the extent of the damage caused by poor quality production when it claimed that in 1953 alone Czechoslovak industry suffered a loss of more than one billion *koruny* because of production rejects and that in the same period production costs of one ton of steel had increased by 48 percent. Other press commentaries confirmed this situation. *Rude Pravo* (Prague), April 4, announced, for instance, that the Plotiste and LZ Pilsen Foundries deliver respectively as much as 22 and 19 percent in rejects. Similarly, the Branec Iron and Steel Works produces 35 percent in rejects and the Mortorpal Prague as much as 28 percent. In its March 20 issue *Rude Pravo* revealed that the AZNP automobile factory had lost 8 million *koruny* on rejects, and placed the blame for this and comparable losses in other industries on worker negligence: "People [and not machines] are responsible for the fact that the Starorolsky China Plant produced only 20 percent in [acceptable] goods."

Nobody but the workers in the Severoceska Machine Plant caused a loss of 4,400,000 *koruny* resulting from production rejects. And so we could name one plant after another."

That this unsatisfactory situation has continued for some time is indicated by criticisms voiced earlier in the year. For example on January 23, *Rude Pravo* (Prague) reported the following statement by the Minister of Light Industry: "We have to end the state of affairs whereby some plants do not maintain quality standards. . . . NP Atlas [producing silks] made only 19.5 percent first class fabrics. NP Orban [waterproof cloth] produced only 19 percent in first class merchandise, and Pragodev [woolen blouses] only 35 percent." In other words, production reports in the first four months of 1954 point to an extraordinary amount of waste in the centralized Communist economy and neither pleas nor admonitions have succeeded in remedying matters.

Such widespread inefficiency may be due partly to worker fatigue and discontent—if not to deliberate industrial sabotage. The newspaper *Nova Svoboda* (Ostrava), March 14, rebuked workers for loitering and chatting in front of factory gates instead of reporting to work, and claimed that many employees leave before the end of the working day. On March 25, the same newspaper indicated that absenteeism was still widespread. In one mine, *Nova Svoboda* said, absenteeism reached a peak of 28.8 percent on a Saturday shift and as a result disciplinary proceedings were instituted twice monthly: "It was decided to postpone their payday by one day. They will be paid outside, in the yard, near the 'Shame Table' with the public and staff admitted." According to *Svoboda* (Prague), March 5, 1953, losses due to unexcused absenteeism and time wasted during production amounted to 7,357,821 days in the Prague region alone. These reports on absenteeism and apathy suggest that after years of undernourishment and hard work, the Czechoslovak worker is either unable or unwilling to greatly exert himself. In this respect, an interesting comment appeared in a recent issue of the Slovak Union paper *Praca* (Bratislava), which stated that workers these days often have to retire or seek easy jobs at forty years of age because of ill health. In any case, it is clear that the Communist bureaucracy and centralized economy has deprived workers of their initiative.

As a result of these conditions, the regime recently called upon social and welfare institutions to administer benefits so that they contribute to production rises. Since the beginning of the year, for instance, Trade Unions have been empowered to exercise wider supervision of health insurance benefits in factories and plants. The January issue of *Narodni Pojisteni* (Prague) urged the Trade Unions to follow a stern policy so that health insurance aids not only workers but also production: "In practice, the Trade Union Councils competence has . . . to make health insurance an effective instrument in raising productivity."

The recent postponement of shop committee elections in Czechoslovakia (See May 1954 issue, p. 48) is probably partly due to low labor productivity and worker apathy. Possibly the regime hopes to find a means of combating worker indifference and ensuring Communist allies in the committees by next fall, when the elections are sched-

uled to take place. It is significant, however, that by blaming the workers for production losses, the regime is in effect admitting the defection of the industrial proletariat which it pretends to support and represent.

## Poland

On April 29, the Polish regime announced price cuts on food, industrial products and meals served by communal catering establishments, as well as on other services. These price reductions will allegedly result in an annual yearly savings to consumers of six billion *zlotys*. According to Radio Warsaw, April 30, the price reductions include the following: sugar, 7.8 percent; butter, an average of 9 percent; milk 7-8 percent; cheese, an average of 12 percent; grain products (flour, macaroni, cereal), 5-8.5 percent; cold cuts (sausages, veal, smoked pork, etc.), 4-10 percent; fish, 10-15 percent; tobacco, 4.5-8.8 percent; soap, 10-11 percent; woolen textiles, 10-35 percent; cotton textiles, 5-35 percent; silk, an average of 10 percent; wool clothes, 10-16 percent; clothes made from linen, silk and synthetic fabrics, 4-17 percent; underwear and pajamas, 10-28 percent; stockings and socks, 5-17 percent; shoes produced domestically, 5-15 percent; bicycles and motorcycles, 5-10 percent; farm machinery and tools, 5-10 per-



Title: Privileged customers.

Caption: A manager whispering in the ear of a salesman: "We just received a first-class shipment. Go call our relatives and friends immediately, before the public finds out!"

Urzica (Bucharest), January 1, 1954



cent; electrical equipment, 10 percent; leather goods (brief cases, gloves, wallets, etc.), 10 percent; cosmetics, 10-40 percent; sporting goods, 5 percent; baby carriages, 25 percent; postal rates, 25-33 percent; and cooperative services, such as dry cleaning, house-painting, laundry, shoe repairs, etc., 10-34 percent.

Most of the items listed above were included in an earlier New Course price reduction proclaimed last November (See January 1954 issue, p. 50). The prices of flour and butter have now been reduced for the first time, while the costs of bread and meat—with the exception of cold cuts—have not been lowered under either. Although prices are still high, this latest concession is certainly welcome news to the Polish consumer, especially since a second price reduction was not expected. In announcing the first price cuts, *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), November 15, 1953, stated that further price reductions would depend on "the growing volume of industrial farm production, as well as lower overheads," and that "a reduction of prices unaccompanied by production rises and provisions for increased market supplies would be mere adventurism." It is probable that the April reduction is not a result of these improvements but an attempt to give the people incentive to boost production and lower overhead. The only indication that the regime had previously contemplated a second price reduction was that the November price cuts were announced as "partial."

Taking into account both price reductions—the former resulting in an alleged yearly savings of 4.5 billion *zlotys*—the regime has promised the people an estimated savings of 10.5 billion *zlotys* or about 400 *zlotys* per capita and 800 per working person. As monthly wages in Poland average about 700 *zlotys*, the price reductions should result in an eight percent increase in real wages.

### Trial of Miners

On April 25, Radio Warsaw reported the trial of two miners before the Military Court in Stalinogrod (formerly Katowice). The defendants were charged with starting a fire which broke out in the Zabrze-Wschod Coal Mine on February 24. Although the fire was extinguished immediately and no casualties were reported, the sentences handed down by the Court were severe: one miner was sentenced to death and the other to 15 years imprisonment for sabotage allegedly inspired by Western propaganda. In view of the fact that safety conditions in Polish mines are notoriously poor and that previous to the trial, on March 25, a large disaster resulting in many deaths was reported in the Barbara-Wyzwolenie Mine in Chorzow, it is clear that the regime's purpose was to make scapegoats of the two miners. Press commentaries on both incidents blamed enemy activity and worker sabotage for fires apparently caused by regime negligence.

So far the regime has staged no trial of men allegedly responsible for the Chorzow disaster. Combined with regime insistence that safety regulations in the mines be rigorously observed, this fact indicates that the charge of enemy activity was a whitewash attempt. As usual in such cases, the press harped on the importance of vigilance.

Sporev

- **First reports on elections results** for regional, district and local National Committees: 98.3 percent of the eligible voters went to the polls and 93.6 of them voted for regime candidates. (It is significant that in spite of intensive and prolonged propaganda, in spite of the intentional vagueness of provisions on what constituted a valid anti-regime ballot, five percent of the people succeeded in voicing their opposition). [Radio Prague, May 20]
- **"Workers' Party":** At an April 17 Party conference of the Ostrava region (scene of one of the June 1953 uprisings and one of the most industrialized areas of Czechoslovakia), it was announced that from May 1953 to February 1954 the Party had expelled three times more members than it had accepted into its ranks. "It is a serious shortcoming," commented the First Secretary of the regional Party committee, "... that most of the expelled members are workers." [Nova Svoboda (Ostrava), April 18]
- **Planned Economy:** On May 19, Radio Warsaw broadcast the text of a decree of the Council of Ministers concerning registration and residence regulations in the Warsaw area. As of May 15, persons arriving in Warsaw will be registered for: 1. temporary stay, allowing them to stay in the Capital for two months without a work permit; 2. permanent residence, which will be granted to persons "when they can justify their stay by social and economic reasons"; 3. residence for a specified period, permitting employment up to one year.
- **A rich sulphur deposit** was allegedly discovered in Poland toward the end of last year. It is claimed that it is the "richest in Europe" and that exploitation will begin in 1955. No exact location was given. [Zycie Warszawy, April 17-19]
- **The appointment** of a new Lithuanian Minister of Internal Affairs, Alfonsas A. Gailevicius, was announced by Radio Vilnius on May 7. Gailevicius is the fifth consecutive official to head the Ministry since Stalin's death. No mention was made of his predecessor, Kazys Liaudis. The May 7 broadcast also announced the appointment of Jonas J. Laurinaitis to the post of Deputy Premier.
- **A series of important shifts** in the Romanian government and State Planning Commission were announced by Radio Bucharest on May 18. Marcel Popescu, formerly Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, was promoted to head the Ministry and Gheorghe Ciara, formerly Deputy Minister of Electric Energy and Electro-Tech-



nical Industry, has now replaced the top man in the Ministry, Gheorghe Gaston Marin, who was assigned to the post of Vice President of the State Planning Commission. Alexandru Barladeanu, who had been Minister of Foreign Trade since October 8, 1948, was also transferred to the Planning Commission and he too was given the rank of Vice President. The State Planning Commission is now directed by: Miron Constantinescu, President and Emil Stanciu, Ion Ionescu-Puturi, Petre Balaceanu, Dumitru Cismasu, Alexandru Barladeanu and Gheorghe Gaston Marin, all Vice Presidents. The addition of the two high-ranking experts seems to indicate that greater authority has now been given to the State Planning Commission as a central coordinating agency, entrusted with the task of improving and supervising the implementation of New Course policies.

- **Crime and Punishment:** "The manufacturing industry did not fulfill the 1953 plan for reducing production costs. The actual saving was only 0.9 percent as against a scheduled 2.9 percent. Losses caused by rejects amounted to 400 forints at the Ministry of Smelting and Machine Industry . . . production cost is rising; many industrial enterprises, state farms and commercial enterprises are squandering State property in a disgraceful manner." [Excerpt from an article by Bela Szalai, President of the Planning Bureau, Szabad Nep (Budapest), May 9] "The Budapest District Court sentenced Sandor Fabik, manager of the Bortex shoe factory, and Janos Baricz, its Technical Manager, to terms of imprisonment of one year and three months respectively, because almost 30 percent of the shoes . . . manufactured between January 21 and February 23, 1954 were qualified as rejects." [Szabad Nep, May 8]
- **Defense of the indefensible:** "It has been determined that lawyers, involved with class enemies or persons hostile to the regime . . . have started actions of their own initiative against the kolkhozes. . . . The Disciplinary Committee of the Lawyers' Association did not handle such cases with adequate severity . . . the sentences were not in proportion to the grave anti-social character of the crimes. . . ." [Szabad Nep, May 14]
- **The Tisza dam,** the largest of its kind under the Five Year Plan, was inaugurated on May 9. This dam raises the Tisza river water level by eight meters, thus making it navigable as far as Zahony, the Russian border station. Besides, the dam is already providing irrigation facilities for a 22,000-25,000 acre area, used mainly for growing rice. The event was reported with great fanfare in all May 9 papers.

Zycie Warszawy (Warsaw), March 25, wrote the following in an article entitled "Over a Miner's Grave":

"From bitter experience, we learn the truth of the fact that the enemy is awake, that he does not give up his contemptible schemes or his loathsome activities, that both dollars and German marks flow for this purpose, that vigilance is our sacred duty. Among the words with which the nation bids farewell to the dead miners, the devoted sons of People's Poland, the words, 'We shall not forget,' should not be excluded. We shall guard our country against [the perpetrators of this crime]."

Trybuna Ludu (Warsaw), March 25, also tried to impress its readers with the urgent need for vigilance, but in the same editorial dispelled the myth it was trying to create by stating that violations of safety regulations would be severely punished. "The disaster at the Barbara Wyzwolenie Mine," the newspaper wrote, "reminds us of the duty of vigilance, the duty of each citizen. . . . The foe's hand aims at the vital interests of each of us. We must be on our guard against all attempts at sabotage, diversion, and espionage carried out by the reactionary remnants and their commissioned agents." However, the editorial went on to state that although the government spent a great deal of money insuring safety and health conditions in the mines, the funds provided for this purpose were not adequately utilized. "We must not tolerate cases of neglect of safety matters by local authorities, Party organs, worker councils and managements. Work safety regulations must be rigorously observed everywhere, and those who transgress should be severely punished."

## Trade Union Congress

The Third Congress of Polish Trade Unions, attended by 967 delegates, was held in Warsaw between May 5-9. According to Premier Bierut, the number of Trade Union members has increased fourfold over 1945 as a result of the "great historic process of industrialization." From absolute figures given at the Congress, Trade Union membership now totals 4,500,000, representing an increase of one million members since the last Congress in 1949. It is interesting to note that while the Third Congress probably was held in connection with the New Course, Trade Union statutes stipulate that a Congress should be held once every three years. The Third Congress should therefore have been held in 1952—not 1954.

In his speech to the Congress, Premier Bierut underscored Trade Union tasks in raising production; he particularly emphasized the importance of developing worker competitions, exercising strict economy in production, and using labor-saving devices. Bierut also pointed out that Trade Unions must help strengthen the "worker-peasant alliance"—one of the Party's chief tasks in the New Course—as well as the "international brotherhood of labor." Further, he suggested that Trade Unions extend their influence by utilizing their "tremendous resources" in the fields of culture, education, sports and in the social and organizational sectors. The basis for fulfilling these tasks, he said, was close cooperation with the Party in accordance with

the Party's Trade Union directives of last April.

The speech delivered by Chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions, Wiktor Klosiewicz, highlighted similar points. As quoted by Radio Warsaw, May 6, Chairman Klosiewicz discussed Trade Union shortcomings: he stated that many Trade Union activists did not understand that Socialist competitions can be expanded only by improving the workers' "political consciousness" and by showing them the advantages of higher work productivity. In line with the New Course program, Klosiewicz also complained that Trade Unions had not paid sufficient attention to improving worker living conditions or to labor, safety and hygiene laws. Like Bierut, Klosiewicz urged Trade Union members not only to improve industrial production but also to participate more actively in the nation's efforts to raise agricultural output—to help in the countryside and develop ties between workers and peasants.

Certain changes in Trade Union statutes, accepted "unanimously" by the Congress, were discussed over Radio Warsaw, May 8. The Communist commentator pointed out that the Statutes emphasized more strongly than hitherto the political role of Trade Unions as a wide, non-Party, voluntary organization. Further, privileges of Trade Union members allegedly have been extended, specially in case of childbirth or accident. At the same time, the tasks of Trade Union members were also increased: according to new requirements, members must now fight both waste and work shortcomings more than ever, while constantly improving their qualifications. Radio Warsaw, May 8, also revealed that in the future, Trade Unions will exercise greater supervision of working conditions and will also administer social insurance. Hitherto, insurance had come under the jurisdiction of a Social Insurance Administration working with the Trade Unions. Now the Unions will have exclusive administrative rights. They will also have greater say in initiating labor laws and in "clarifying" legislation already in force. From these provisions, it is clear that the regime is relying on better Trade Union activity to carry out some aspects of the New Course economic plans.

On May 9, Radio Warsaw broadcast the results of elections to the Central Council of Trade Unions. The Council's Plenum elected 23 Presidium members—although the 1949 Statutes provided for only 21. Klosiewicz was again elected Chairman, and the new Secretaries are: Alojzy Firganek, Roman Gajzler, Bronislaw Marks, Stanislaw Stachacz, Artur Starewicz, and Zofia Wasilkowska.

## Hungary

Within the past month, the Hungarian regime focussed on agricultural problems and placed special emphasis on gaining the middle peasant as an ally in raising farm output. In a speech over Radio Kossuth, April 12, propagandist Gabor Lenard enunciated the Party's appeasement policy toward the middle peasant, pointing out that he is the key figure in the countryside since he owns 50 percent of the independent farm land. Lenard also claimed that the majority of poor peasants already belong to the collectives and that the development of collectivization there-

fore depends upon the inclusion and support of middle peasants, who must be won over to "Socialism." In elaborating on this problem, Lenard said:

"The peasants were treated badly . . . when they left the kolkhozes. . . . The middle peasant is a great rarity in our Party organizations and leadership. . . . Why is this so? Why has practice deviated from principle? When so many people left the kolkhozes, we often heard such remarks as: 'We know that the middle peasant is our ally, but it is impossible to get along with these local middle peasants.' And they spoke of some who voiced reactionary opinions, or others who would have distributed kolkhoz stock if they had been permitted. And on top of all this, they said, the middle peasants were struggling in the web of kulaks."

Admitting that "kulaks" still "influence" middle peasants, Lenard pointed out that kulaks will always retain the characteristics of kulaks and that it is the task of local Party organizations to see that middle peasants adhere unwaveringly to the Party line. However, Lenard cautioned that the middle peasants should not be regarded with suspicion: "In many villages . . . the good qualities of middle peasants are not known, and for this reason, efforts to consolidate our alliance with them were merely a formality. . . . Instead of trying to know the middle peasant and giving him constant and sincere attention, many of our comrades regard the middle peasant only as a temporary ally with whom they must be friends for only an hour or so."

The same conciliatory attitude was expressed by *Szabad Fold* (Budapest), April 11, in an article entitled, "The Kulak Question at Regoldy." The newspaper complained that a number of middle peasants had mistakenly been branded as kulaks, and asserted: "The only crime of these decent, worthy peasants was that they lived in nice houses and had well-cared for farms and good livestock. They never engaged in systematic and permanent exploitation and therefore cannot be kulaks." The March issue of *Társadalmi Szemle* (Budapest) published an article entitled, "The Central Problem of our Party's Peasant Policy: Alliance with the Middle Peasantry," which also tried to make a sharp distinction between middle peasants and kulaks. The review claimed that "the attitude toward individual possessions is much stronger in the middle peasants of our country than it was in Tsarist Russia. That is why they still have an aversion for collective movements. Yet we need their expert knowledge and organizational forces. . . . It was wrong to set the lower limit of kulak holdings to 25 acres." This last statement indicates that "kulaks" with small holdings will now be classified as middle peasants and that the regime is trying to draw a sharp line between the two groups, probably with the aim of isolating the "kulaks." It is clear from regime propaganda that the support of middle peasants is crucial for the development of agriculture.

While strengthening the "alliance" with middle peasants, the regime is making efforts to raise kolkhoz production. At the National Convention of Kolkhoz Workers, March 27-28, Prime Minister Imre Nagy underscored the concessions and aid granted kolkhozes under the New Course and

insisted that they attain better work results. Nagy stated that it was a matter of honor to fight for the "superiority of kolkhoz agriculture," and complained that low yields, neglected livestock, lack of discipline and low incomes are incompatible with collective farming. Nagy also said that the lag in farm production must be overcome and that it was essential to make full use of farm machines: "There is a noticeable reluctance to use machines," he said, "or to sign contracts with tractor stations. This attitude hampers the timely completion of work." In addition to these complaints, the Convention emphasized the importance of maintaining friendly relations with non-collective farmers.

Other farm difficulties were revealed in reports on the First Quarter of the Plan for 1954. *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), April 23, indicated that the livestock situation was unsatisfactory. As a result of poor fodder crops, the newspaper said, the number of hogs and cattle had decreased in comparison with the same period last year. The number of sheep had increased but the number of horses remained the same. The newspaper complained further about failures in crop collections and payment of taxes. An indication of the extent of regime troubles appeared in *Szabad Fold*, April 11, which blamed Radio Free Europe for the lag in hog deliveries:

"The schedule adopted by certain communities for the delivery of outstanding hog quotas for last year and this is especially disgraceful. At Alap . . . and Sarkeresztur, they propose to pay off last year's debt as late as November, December 1954. . . . Aside from indolence, the reason for the delay is probably the widespread, false and hostile rumor about 'cancellation of last year's debts, just as 1952 delivery arrears were cancelled.' This idea is diligently spread by the Hungarian apostles of the Fascist Radio Free Europe."

## Bulgaria

In further carrying out its New Course, particularly with respect to raising agricultural output, the Bulgarian People's Assembly recently approved a decree by the Council of Ministers for reduction of income taxes for certain categories of "citizens, collective farms and kolkhoz members." As reported by *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), April 9, the Bulgarian Ministry of Finance estimates that collective farmers will have to pay 50 percent less in taxes in 1954 as compared with 1953. In addition, kolkhoz members will pay lower taxes on products from their private household plots. The same decree provides for a tax reduction for collective members of retail outlets for consumer goods. The income tax for artisan collectives remains the same, with some increase in the event of higher profits. Another decree approved by the Assembly abolished food control sanitation taxes and taxes for technical services and use of quarry materials by tractor stations. In addition, the basic military tax—paid by students, professionals and semi-invalids for exemption from military service, as well as by those seeking exemption for family reasons—was reduced, and a number of government documents were declared free of city taxation.



—"What about it, darling?"

—"I promised. I'll keep my word."

—"Are you sure?"

—"Absolutely."

—"When will it be?"

—"In a week, at the latest. Perhaps in three days."

—"You and me?"

—"Yes. Together. Together, we'll work on the newly-delivered machine, HD-48!"

*Zycie Warszawy* (Warsaw), April 19, 1954

## Coal Crisis

On April 20, the Bulgarian regime made public a decree designed to overcome the present coal crisis. The decree, printed in *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), attributed the current lag in coal production to poor planning and inefficient management. In the First Five Year Plan, the newspaper said, the Ministry of Heavy Industry and the State Planning Commission were too shortsighted and failed to provide for the construction of new pits, the training of technical cadres and the development of geological research. Further, shortcomings still exist in the Ministry of Heavy Industry, and mining officials still fail to make full use of progressive techniques and personnel. They do not create conditions favorable for the fulfillment of labor norms, ignore the "cultural" conditions of the miners and do not ensure proper work organization. In addition, mass political work in the coal industry is unsatisfactory:

"A number of Party, trade union and youth organizations do not wage a constant and persistent struggle for strengthening labor discipline, for creating a constant supply of qualified manpower, for developing Socialist competitions, for strengthening the movement of Stakhanovites and shockworkers, which are the main conditions for securing rhythmic fulfillment of production plans and preparatory work, and the building of new pits."



To eliminate these shortcomings, the regime decree contained the following provisions: in the Second Five Year Plan coal output must increase by 89 percent over 1952—soft coal by 60 percent, lignite by 68 percent, bituminous coal by 152 percent and anthracite by 100 percent. Capital investments in the coal industry must increase up to 512.3 percent in comparison with the First Five Year Plan, of which 490.29 percent will be allocated to the construction of new mines. Further, geological research for establishing new coal, iron ore and copper reserves and for building new pits must be expanded, and qualified worker and technical cadres must be assured. The fifth and last provision of the decree reads:

"The Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, taking into consideration the tasks of the coal industry during the Second Five Year Plan, . . . obliges all Party organizations in the coal industry to decisively improve Party organizational and political work. Party organizations in the mines must head Socialist competitions and wage a struggle for their expansion."

From the above statement it is clear that the regime intends to put great pressure on the miners in order to eliminate present deficiencies and that production norms will remain high. However, high production norms are no answer to regime problems, considering that as a result of ruthless industrialization in the First Five Year Plan many pits have been exhausted. This much was admitted by *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), April 9, which cited as an example the September Ninth pit, which is one of the largest in the country. This condition has been aggravated by the fact that the construction of new pits is lagging behind schedule. For example, *Trud* (Sofia), April 8, complained that the first quarter of the 1954 plan for construction of a new pit in the Maritza coal basin was fulfilled by only 25 percent. In any case, the coal crisis can be expected to continue for some time to come. According to Deputy Premier Anton Yugov, in a speech printed by *Rabotnichesko Delo*, March 5, the required time for putting a new pit into operation is three years. If work continues to lag behind schedule, this process will naturally take longer.

## Labor Service

On March 20, *Izvestia na Presidium na Narodnoto Sabranie* (Sofia) made public a decree which in effect made the Compulsory Labor Service a branch of the regular Army. In announcing this decree, the regime stated the Compulsory Labor Service was an organization of young men of draft eligibility who could not be enlisted in the regular Army because of the limits imposed by the 1947 Peace Treaty. According to this Treaty, Bulgaria is permitted to have a land Army of 55,000 men, an anti-aircraft artillery of 1,800, a navy of 3,500 men and a total tonnage of 7,250, and an air force, including the naval air arm, of 5,200 men and 90 aircraft of which not more than 70 may be combat planes. In discussing the activities of the Labor Service and its relation to the Army, the decree states:

"The Labor Service fulfills economic, construction and other tasks. Its members are given the proper ideological training and education. The term of service is three years. The dates for drafting or discharging members of the Labor Service are ordered by the Minister of National Defense.

"Officers, enlisted men and employees of the Labor Service are classified according to similar categories of the Ministry of National Defense, and are entitled to the same remunerations after a certain period of service. Further, they are subject to all the regulations of the decree for Regular Army Service."

As originally organized in 1920, the Compulsory Labor Service was intended to employ young Bulgarian citizens on construction of public works, such as railroads and irrigation projects. Under the Communist regime, the original period of service has been extended from eight to 36 months and recruits must undergo military training for a period of three months. Further, according to refugee reports, the labor battalions are now put to work not on public projects but on important strategic roads, airfields and fortifications. On the basis of information from various reliable sources, it can be estimated that the total number of men now in the Labor Service is about 70,000. The recent decree issued by the regime probably will result in few changes, its main purpose being to "legalize" a situation which has existed for some time.

## The Big Patch

At a political meeting a Party speaker asked a Romanian worker how many shirts he had before the Communists came to power. "Two," replied the worker, and the Party speaker observed, "The material was probably very poor, wasn't it?" The worker nodded his head in agreement. "And how many shirts have you got now?" asked the Party man. "One," replied the worker. "Ah," said the Party man, "but the material is different from what it was in the old days. Go ahead, tell everybody what your shirt is made of."

"To tell the truth," replied the worker after hesitating for a moment, "to tell the truth, it is made of what was left of the two I had before."



## Recent and Related

**Satellite Agriculture in Crisis: A Study of Land Policy in the Soviet Sphere**, prepared by the research staff of Free Europe Press, a division of the Free Europe Committee, Inc. (*Praeger: \$3.50; soft cover, \$2.50*). No. 13 in the Praeger Series on Russian History and World Communism.) This study of the transfer of the Soviet land system to the Satellites traces the rise of State and collectivized agriculture in East-Central Europe from 1945 to the present. After a brief summary of the native agrarian structure which Soviet-trained planners met in Eastern Europe after the Second World War, the main body of the study examines the pattern and pace of Satellite collectivization and the balance sheet of the entire effort. Illustrated with charts, graphs, and tables, and utilizing original Soviet, Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian sources wherever possible, the study presents a fund of information made available for the first time in English.

**Challenge in Eastern Europe**, edited by C. E. Black, with a foreword by Joseph C. Grew (*Rutgers, in association with the Mid-European Studies Center of the Free Europe Committee, Inc.: \$4.00*). Six exiled statesmen from Eastern Europe and five American scholars draw on their expert knowledge to interpret the contemporary history and character of the seven Iron Curtain countries and their significance to the West. Twelve essays describe this region in its progress from agrarian backwardness and political strife "toward a more complex society, a more productive economy, and a more stable political system"—a development set back by the policies of the Communist regimes since the Second World War, but nonetheless inherent and inevitable, and constituting "the challenge of Eastern Europe."

**Art Under A Dictatorship**, by Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt (*Oxford: \$5.50*). The story of the perversion of art to propaganda under twentieth-century dictatorships. The author describes the art policies of the Soviet Union and of Nazi Germany, describing when and where these policies were made, how they resemble each other, how the cooperation of artists was secured, what happened to those who did not cooperate, what was

the effect on the public, and how art—in its entire range from pure to applied—is controlled and corrupted by totalitarian governments.

**Religion Behind the Iron Curtain**, by George N. Shuster (*Macmillan: \$4.00*). Using documents, eye-witness reports and personal knowledge, the author shows how Communist theory and practice affects the religious life of the vast numbers of Catholics, Jews and Protestants living under Communist domination in Europe.

**Czechoslovakia**, by Harriet Wanklyn (*Praeger: \$6.25*). A comprehensive study of Czechoslovakia's history, climate, vegetation and soils, forests, farming and settlement, with attention to regional geography, communications, trade and industry.

**Why Dictators?**, by George W. F. Hallgarten (*Macmillan: \$5.50*). This study of the manipulation of society by dictators from Caesar to Stalin, Robespierre to Mao, points up the similarity in motive and technique between present-day dictators and ancient tyrants.

**The Allies and the Russian Revolution**, by Robert D. Warth (*Duke: \$4.50*). An examination of the diplomacy, or lack of it, practiced by the Allied Powers in the first year of the Russian Revolution. . . . **We Chose to Stay**, by Lali Horstmann (*Houghton Mifflin: \$3.00*). An account of the Red Army occupation of East Germany by a woman who with her husband decided not to leave their estate when the Russians came in. . . . **The Bolshevik Revolution: 1917-1923**, by Edward Hallett Carr (*Macmillan: \$6.00*). Third volume in a series on Russia's revolutionary period. . . . **A Documentary History of Chinese Communism**, by Conrad Brandt, Benjamin Schwartz and John K. Fairbank (*Harvard: \$7.50*). A basic survey of the development of Chinese Communist strategy. . . . **Where We Came Out**, by Granville Hicks (*Viking: \$3.50*). The well-known novelist, critic, and one-time (1935-39) Communist Party member analyzes intellectual Communism in the Nineteen Thirties and what can be done to find an ideological position between the extreme of Soviet Communism and its counterpart of the reactionary Right.



THE FREE EUROPE COMMITTEE was founded in 1949 by a group of private American citizens who joined together for direct action aimed at the eventual liberation of the peoples of the Iron Curtain countries. With the help of endowments and public contributions to the Crusade for Freedom, the Committee has set up, among other activities, Radio Free Europe. The Committee's efforts are focused on the captive countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In these efforts the Committee counts among its active allies the democratic leaders—scholars, journalists, political and economic experts, and men of letters—who have escaped from the Communist enslavement of their native lands.

---

**Free Europe Committee, Inc.**

110 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

*Return Postage Guaranteed*

